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Transformed Hinduism

Transformed Hinduism

The Monotheistic Religion of
Beauty

By the Author of
"God the Beautiful"

Vol. II

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Transformed Hinduism

Hindu Philosophical Systems

THE NYAYA AND VAISESHIKA

THE development of India's religious thoughts from the earliest times falls into four stages—Vedism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Modern Hinduism. We have considered the two first stages, and in my previous work, "God the Beautiful," we considered the third stage. There is, therefore, now only left the fourth or last stage, namely, Modern Hinduism. Before dealing, however, with this, it is necessary to give a short sketch of the philosophical schools called Darsanas. The subject in itself forms one of the most interesting chapters in the history of Aryan thought. The Aryans have excelled all other nations upon earth in

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abstract studies, and much can be gained by following them in their search of truth as well as by trying to find out where they went astray.

The six Darsanas or Demonstrations of truth contain a number of methodical treatises, partly representing original ideas, partly composed in order to classify and expand the earlier utterances found by later thinkers in the old Upanishads. The Darsanas have for many centuries represented the orthodox philosophy of India in its various aspects. The date and order of their composition is uncertain. Many European scholars frequently begin the list with Sankhya, others with Vedanta. In India the list is generally given in the following order: Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimansa, Vedanta. They are often classified in pairs—

Nyaya and Vaisesika.

Sankhya and Yoga.

Mimansa and Vedanta.

It is thought that by being thus placed in relation to each other, rather than in opposi-

tion, they are seen in their unity as one great scheme of philosophical truth.

The first two systems are strictly logical, and are founded on the Theistic theory of the world.

The third and fourth systems are built upon the Duality of the manifested Universe.

The fifth and sixth systems in different ways uphold the Monistic conception of the world, for to them the whole Universe and Existence in general are all founded upon Unity. Taking each separately, the Nyaya is logical; the Vaiseshika, atomistic; the Sankhya, agnostic; the Yoga, ascetic; the Mimansa, mystical; the Vedanta, idealistic.

In each Darsana there is first the name of the Author or Rishi (teacher) who has given his speculations in the form of aphorisms (Sutras). This was followed in succeeding generations by a Bhashya, or a "commentor," regarded as authoritative, for the Sutras were mere memorial suggestions of the briefest possible kind to aid the recollection of each of the Rishis.

In approaching them one must avoid a carping or unduly critical spirit, and try rather to seek out what is true and excellent, than elaborate their shortcomings.

The Nyaya system is ascribed to Gotama, about the fourth century B.C. The title Nyaya was chosen because the word means—"investigating a subject analytically." Hence it is chiefly a system of logic. The authoritative commentary is that of Vatsyayana.

The Vaiseshika system is ascribed to an anonymous author known under the fictitious name Kanada or Uluka. The commentary or Bhashya is that of Prashastapada. The Nyaya is contained in five books with sixteen topics. Each book contains two daily portions or Ahnikas of the means and objects of knowledge. The Vaiseshika system contains ten lectures, both recorded in Sutras, while Kanada laid down six Padarthas or categories under which all nameable things could be classified.

Several commentaries have been written, and each system has had a school of its own,

which have expanded and harmonised their respective masters' ideas.

Gotama and Kanada, although living in different ages, may be treated almost as one, for they both agree in their metaphysics, their psychology, and the results they had arrived at in connection with their physical investigations. The Nyaya system is generally considered the oldest, to which the Vaiseshika may be called a supplement. It is chiefly devoted to logic and the laws of thought. Gotama teaches that when a man, by reason, has freed himself from ignorance he attains liberation of the soul or bliss, which was the universally accepted goal. Gotama is chiefly known as one of the most acute logicians which India has produced, as is seen in his original analysis of the laws of thought.

The author of Vaiseshika is equally celebrated as an Atomist. He is chiefly occupied with the survey, classification, and explanation of the various objects in nature, and placing of Existence in general upon an atomic basis.

These two seekers set out with the same inquiry which had occupied the thoughts of generations of Hindus: "What is the best way to attain perfect beatitude, or liberation of soul?"

Both give the same answer: "Beatitude is acquired by a knowledge of the truth." To reach beatitude, however, is not only to "know" the truth, but also to "obey" and "practise" it. Only by combining the intellect with the will and the emotions does each get its proper share of work to advance the soul to the longed for "beatitude" which mere knowledge could never do by itself.

Most of the learned men of their times built their beliefs upon priestly assumptions supplied by superstition. To correct this loose way of thinking, Gotama set himself to compose a carefully and complete system of logic, after first having surveyed the whole field of arguments already employed by others. In this way he furnished a well thought out method of philosophical investigation into all the subjects of human knowledge, including

chiefly the laws of thought. He regarded Sensation as the origin of our knowledge.

Considering the distant age of composition, the work is admirable for close reasoning and subtlety of thought. Modern writers are able to point out many defects, but much solid gold of truth is found in it, and it exhibits considerable advance on previous writers' analysis of the objects of thought.

He investigated truth through sixteen categories or topics, under which were classed all phenomena. The means of investigation he employed were four in number. The textbook of the system is Nyaya Sutra of Gotama. The result of this logical system was summed up in his learned message, that any one who became master of it would have his false notions removed. These false notions he regarded as at the bottom of all the misery and sins in the world. When the soul came to see the truth clearly and in all its persuasive beauty, it would reach its final emancipation, beatitude. Unfortunately for humanity, the way pointed out by Gotama, even if true,

could only be reached by the highest intellects of India, to whom indeed it was chiefly addressed. To the rest of humanity, the toiling myriads, the message had no word of comfort or encouragement; so the Brahmans' plain way of salvation, although full of superstitions, continued to be followed by the millions, and is to this day.

It will be the mission of the Religion of Beauty to show to both priest and people that the true way of salvation is by the knowledge which reveals the love of God and His beautiful attractive character that transforms the soul to His likeness.

Not only were Gotama and Kanada profound thinkers in the realm of logic, but they also proved themselves original thinkers in their speculations concerning the three great mysteries of Existence—God, the Soul, and Nature. They were both opponents of the extreme Idealistic and of the Agnostic mode of thought. The latter tried to explain the world without a personal Creator. Kanada enthroned as a necessity of thought

an Eternal Supreme Personal Spirit of the Universe, the framer of the world and all it contained, as opposed to those schools which taught Pantheism, by making everything God and God everything. Kanada brought in the idea of "separateness," the idea that God is entirely distinct or separate from both Souls and Nature. Similarly he made Souls separate from either God or Nature. His system, therefore, embraces a threefold separateness, and postulated

An Eternal Supreme Personal God of the world.

An Eternal multitudinous number of Souls.
Eternal atoms.

He did not put these three "eternals" on an "equality." He explained the evolution of the Cosmos as under the sole control of the Supreme Spirit, whose instruments were—

(1) *Eternal Souls*.—These were represented as diffused throughout space. Souls were not created, but eternal, self-existent, and imperishable essences—"Svayambhic." Souls might

take up their abode in Gods, demons, beasts, birds, fishes, insects, plants, even into inanimate objects. Not only were souls eternal and separate from each other, but in their essence they were infinitely extended, and existed everywhere, just as ether with its universal diffusion is everywhere. In this way souls partook of omnipresence, being free of all earthly limitations, besides free of all wants and miseries, enjoying, when not contaminated with matter, an unruffled, calm existence, complete absorption into pure, unconscious spirit, in which the eternal felicity was conceived by the Ancients. Souls were conceived as parts of Brahm, just as sparks are a part of fire.

It was only after souls had got into the bondage of matter that they became conscious and capable of volition, efforts, desires, pleasures, pains, merits, and demerits. They then experienced the results of deeds, good or bad, done by their casual contact with matter, which represented all that was impure and evil, and therefore degrading to pure and perfect souls.

This theory strengthened the conception of the transmigration of souls with their efforts of escape, so as to get out of the bondage of Samsara, the evolutionary world process. In this way you will notice how Kanada accounted for the existence of sin and evil in the world without attributing these to Brahm, as was done by so many, who, in consequence, had become Atheists. We shall consider this subject again when we come to treat of the Sankhya system.

(2) The *second* instrument of Brahm was Paramanuh or Atoms. As we saw, Kanada's system was a physical philosophy based on an atomic theory. According to him, Nature had come into its present existence by the ceaseless activity of atoms, infinite in number, and invisible to human ken. According to the irrevocable laws of Paramatman (the ineffable and transcendent Being) the atoms were eternally acting by the outfit with which they had been dowered, and therefore evolved material existences by unceasingly aggregating, disintegrating, and again reintegrating their forces,

not, however, haphazardly, but, as it were, intuitively, because each of these infinite and eternal atoms, although having no soul, was yet in possession of a divine essence of its own (*Visesha*), which included mind, and which therefore resulted in the qualitative distinctions observable in the infinite variety seen in Nature, hence also the evident proofs of design, order, and adaptation visible everywhere. Furthermore, these eternally active cosmos building atoms were conceived in one aspect as evolving Nature by secondary causes, say, according to the irresistible effects of *Adrishta* (Destiny), which means that every action (*Karma*) must bring forth its legitimate result from previous cosmical existences. Hence the past was still influencing and regulating the present world in everything great or small, whether for good or for evil. It came, however, to be understood in Kanada's system, as we saw, that a supreme Spirit was postulated (*Paramatma*) which was superior and quite distinct from *Iivatman* (Souls), as well as superior and quite distinct from *Paramanuh*

(Atoms), to whom they were all subordinated. Thus there is a passage by Udayana Acarya, who argues, as a Theist, the existence of a supreme personal God (Iswara), *i.e.* Brahma in its personal aspect, in opposition to atheistical objections:—

“An omniscient and indestructible Being is to be proved from the existence of effects. Now the earth must have a maker, because it is an effect, like a jar.”

In this way Kanada and his followers restored to ordinary minds the common illustration of the potter, the wheel, and the clay, all required to produce the jar. Each is different, or separate, but yet all three are necessary to bring about the desired result.

Let me point out further, that, seeing the atoms were eternal and accounted for the eternal existence of the world, it was impossible that the world should have been created out of nothing, as has been affirmed by others. Indeed, it has always been a fixed dogma among the Hindus that nothing can be produced out of nothing (*Navastuno vashisiddhih*),

and, on the other hand, while forms might change, yet what was really "ultimate" in anything never ceased to be. Hence, what was called "creation" was merely recombinations of already existing atoms, and what was called "destruction" was merely their separation to be anew re-formed according to the effects of the previous Karmas. Besides, nothing happened at random; everything was based upon law and necessity. As has been said, "Not a single particle of what the Universe at present contains can be blotted out of existence, although it will survive in other forms and combinations. The existence of anything at the present moment presupposes its existence in the past, and necessitates its existence in the future."

The Atomistic theory of ancient India and Greece differs considerably from that known in the modern world.

Analytical Chemistry has succeeded up to the present in resolving the almost bewildering variety of substances found in nature into about seventy-eight elements, including the

latest discovered element—Radium. These have again been distributed into fixed groups according to their chemical affinity, and in the order of their atomic weights. Dalton, about a century ago, was the first to formulate the law of simple and multiple proportion in the formation of chemical combinations. These seventy-eight elements are no longer, however, regarded as necessarily unchangeable forms of substance. It is surmised that they are “Electrons,” having capacity of spontaneity. Modern Science is thus inclined to believe that all so-called matter is electricity in different forms and in varying combinations. From this it would follow that all known materials are but collections in different numbers and groups of one single unit, or, in other words, that different forms of matter have been evolved by an Evolver of infinite wisdom and power from one single origin. These practical investigations have enlightened the modern world, by placing the chemistry of “Units of Matter” on an empirical basis, so that the term “Atom” is now used merely

to denote chemical equivalents whereby the elements combine.

'The Ancients' investigations about atoms approached the question from a different standpoint. As science of chemistry was not in existence in these ages, the ancient philosophers concerned themselves chiefly with the supposed nature of hypothetical atoms; their sizes, forms, qualities, objects they served in Nature, and their psychology. All material substances were considered aggregates of atoms which are eternal in themselves, but not eternal as aggregates either in their form, structure, or quality. Modern thinkers have found many of these ancient hypothesis to come very near their own conclusions. For instance, it is now surmised that electrons or ultimate units of matter have not only "spontaneity" as an inalienable birthright, but likewise "affinity" and "repulsion," and that in the chemical relation of the various elements towards each other, they manifest every shade of inclination, from complete indifference to the fiercest passion.

Empedocles, in the fifth century B.C., expounded his theory of the "love and hatred of the elements," and in electrons, in atoms, in molecules, in chemical compounds, in fact throughout the whole of Nature, we find the fundamental "unity of affinity" from the simplest chemical process to human society with its loves and hatreds.

To Gotama and Kanada, however, the teaching of logic and speculation on atoms were only as means to an end. Their end was to show how the coveted "Brahmahood," the "highest bliss of the soul," could be obtained without recourse to priests with their sacrifices, intercessions, or ceremonies.

The two authors built solely upon reason, and hence in guiding their followers to reach the blessed emancipation they attempted to show by the limits of pure reason, the means of gaining right knowledge and the process by which ignorance could be destroyed.

The fruit of their philosophy may be summed up in the following:—

- (1) Belief in a Supreme Personal God.

(2) Belief in a plurality of Souls.

(3) Belief in an atomic system of Nature.

(4) They gave India a correct process of reasoning and stated the laws of thought, with categories of existence.

(5) They showed how the soul might regain its liberty, say by the acquisition of "true knowledge," whereby it would escape from the curse of transmigration. This glorious liberation could be gained without priestly aid of any kind, whether ceremonial or sacrificial.

Hindu Philosophical Systems

THE SANKHYA SYSTEM

WE come now to the third school, which goes under the name of Kapila, who is reported to have lived some 500 years B.C. The word "Sankhya" means "count up," specifying synthetically twenty-five principles, in which he summed up the whole of Nature. Kapila is said to be the Rishi or Author of the Sutras, but some scholars believe these to be only a part of the original Sutras. However, these alone are extant, together with two authoritative commentaries—the Aniruddha and the Vijuana Bhikshu. Kapila's system has largely influenced all subsequent thought in India, and in some respects also Greece and the modern world.

The system is sometimes called Nir-Iswara Sankhya, or "Reasoned Truth without Iswara,"

i.e. without the Supreme Personal Deity. To the query whether Iswara existed or not, Kapila practically answered with the modern Agnostic that the question did not admit of a satisfactory answer, for there were no logical proofs to establish God's existence. Iswara was therefore "unknowable." In fact, in his philosophy there was no room left for Iswara.

In the Vedic hymns thirty-three Deities were invoked among whom the creation, the preservation, and the government of the world were divided. To these the Brahminical priesthood, in its downward career of corruption and by the incorporation of non-Aryan superstitions into the ancient faith, had gradually made large additions, until the number reached thirty-three Crores—330 millions of greater or lesser divinities, half of which were considered beneficent and half malevolent to human beings. Kapila would have nothing to do with such extravagant guesses. He dethroned all these imaginary beings, and in their stead enthroned the "noble reason of man" to be the discoverer and arbiter of all.

The object of Kapila's philosophical investigations was not to explain the origin of things, and in this way he also adroitly avoided coming into conflict with the fanatical Brahmans. He merely wished to discover the best means of liberating the soul from its present degradation. For this bold but unpopular task of elevating human reason to its proper position, and thereby emancipating it from the thralldom of the priesthood, humanity at large owes Kapila a deep debt of gratitude. He was a worthy son of the ancient Aryans, upright, daring, and with mental gifts of the highest order.

In spite of his desire to live in peace with all men, Kapila could not avoid getting into disfavour with the Brahmans, jealous of their powers of absolutism in sacred matters. They placed the soul's "liberation" upon their sole intervention, prayers, sacrifices, and ceremonial services, by which they assured the worshippers that they were able to sway the Deities and make them grant the petitions asked for, if not as a favour, by bribe or compulsion. Kapila,

on the other hand, made "the liberation of the soul" the work of a man himself, independent of any of the 330 million Deities or their priests. Notwithstanding, however, the agnostic and revolutionary teaching upon which Kapila built his system, the charge of unorthodoxy was subsequently withdrawn, when a confession of faith in the Veda was attached to his work. This was probably added after his death. This is found in Aphorism 98: "The declaration of the meaning of the texts of the Veda is an authority since the Authors of them knew the established truth." In this way the work was ultimately admitted as orthodox among the Darsanas. Moreover Kapila's rationalistic system in course of time gained much renown, owing to the novelty of its doctrines and the genius of the author in presenting them. His ideas, or part of his teaching at least, were introduced into the law book of Manu, into the celebrated poem Mahabharata, and in the Puranas; and his conception of the three Gunas has been accepted by all philosophical India.

Kapila's conception of the world, seen and unseen, was intimately influenced by his idea of the soul, looked at from these aspects—its pristine divinity, its present degradation, and its final liberation. Kapila's object in searching for truth was not therefore a barren speculation, but of deep, living, and practical interest. He wished to show men how they could liberate their souls from earthly trammels, and thus once more regain their lost divine state and bliss without the help of priests, and without the soul's passing through transmigration for millions of years.

Kapila, using reason for his only guide, proclaimed in the first place that Cosmic Existence was not a Unity, but a Duality. This Duality, he taught, consisted of two eternally existent essences, absolutely different from one another. The attempt, out of these twain to make *one*, had led to all the misery and pain in the world. Kapila's system is to prove this, and to point out how the Duality can be again established and eternal bliss once more become the Soul's dower. It will

be noticed that Kapila's "Duality of Essences" resemble very much what in the modern world is known as Matter and Spirit, or the objective and subjective sides of existence. Kapila, however, regards the Duality as two opposite *Entities*, instead of as two abstractions of the one Reality.

He starts with two eternal essences. The first he calls *Pradhana*, or Cosmic Existence. It has a twofold aspect: as unmanifested, or Chaos (the undeveloped principle), its name is *Avyakta*; as manifested, or the productive element (Creation), its name is *Prakriti* (*i.e.* that which evolves the primal source of all production). Being an Agnostic, Kapila left the former alone, on the ground that reason by its limitations was debarred from lifting the veil of this mystery. He turned his attention only to what was manifested to our reasoning faculties in the unfolding of the panorama of Existence.

The second essence consists of the Divine Soul or rather Souls, summed up in the name of *Purusha*. Modern philosophers call this

“spirit.” In modern Hinduism Purusha stands for the “male principle in nature,” as Prakriti stands for the “female principle in nature.” The latter was considered to embody the “active” element, as the former embodied the “passive” element. Strange as it may appear to us, this in the East was considered the highest state of Existence. As such Purusha was conceived without mundane qualities, living in an unconditioned state of supreme, unruffled bliss.

What Kapila called “Reality” was the unhappy and fatal temporary Union between Matter and Spirit, between Purusha and Prakriti. The questions arise: Why did Pradhana become Prakriti, and why did Purusha enter into Union with Prakriti? The preliminary short answer is “Desire” on the part of both. Prakriti, when revealed in her true character, is seen as a Sorcerer, the Genius of all Evil, the Tempter and the ruin of Purusha.

In the first stage, Cosmic Existence as “Avyakta” is unmanifested, “without form

and void, darkness being upon the face of the deep."

In the second stage, Chaos gives way to Creation. Prakriti is manifested, because Evolution only begins when the equilibrium is disturbed. The "Desire" which has sprung up in Prakriti's wicked heart towards Purusha gives the impetus to all that follows in the Drama of Existence. The desire for Purusha is not prompted on her part by love, which might have lifted her to his high Estate. It springs from envy and the desire to drag the pure soul down to her own level, and thus get him in her power and keep him in chains for ever.

In the third stage we witness the working out of her deep laid scheme. Prakriti knows full well that only by deception will she gain her infamous end. She, the abandoned, unscrupulous woman, her home a prison, whose jailers are the demons of misery, pain, and sin, effects a wonderful transformation by her magic skill and by using the threefold chords of fate (Gurus). With these she weaves the veil of

Maya (illusion), so that her ugliness and sores are kept out of sight, and to Purusha she appears divinely fair. By her witchery, illusive beauty, and marvellous intelligence (for Mahat-Buddhi or Intellect is her first evolved and subtlest form of mental function) she entices the dreamy, passive, innocent, and unsuspecting divine Purusha to consent to a Union, by which the two may become one. With Purusha it was to erect upon a union of hearts, love's fair dominion for ever. For her, it was to poison his mind, break his heart, degrade him to be a slave, make him as wicked as herself, and drag him from heaven to hell.

In the fourth stage the fatal Union has been completed. She has enchained him with the threefold cords of Gurus, and enveloped him with the veil of Maya. The Linga-Sarira (the subtle body), like everlasting prison walls, surrounds his noble soul, making escape impossible. Purusha is lost, is ruined, her captive and her slave. Worst of all, unhappy Purusha does not realise his degradation. Hypnotised by Prakriti, he hugs his chains and still thinks

himself free, while all the time he has unknowingly entered into the pain of Samsara (the circuit of life) with its sorrows, its deaths, and its eight million transmigrations from life to death and back again from death to life, through millions of bodies.

In the fifth stage Kapila justifies the attitude he took up when first proclaiming his scheme as "reasoned truth" (Sankhya). The way to the "liberation of the soul" is shown to be by "knowledge," not by sacrifices of Brahmans, nor by their prayers, nor by reading the Vedas. We see Purusha awakened by life's pains, to remember his dignity and inborn divinity, to apprehend that the veil of Maya has enveloped him and has become, as it were, a part of himself, by which his disgrace and ruin have been brought about. At last the deceitfulness and slavery of the earthly existence in which he dwells dawns upon him. He finds himself in chains, a prisoner in loathsome company, and exclaims in horror:—"Oh wretched being that I am, who can deliver me from the carcass of this dead body to

which I am chained?" And Reason's answer comes back:—"O Purusha, only by Thyself is Salvation. Thou art thy own Saviour. Listen to me, and I will show thee how thy chains can be broken, thy liberty regained, the Duality of Existence re-established on a firmer basis than ever before. Call to thine aid these three:—

Memory, the treasure-house of past knowledge. Let *memory* with its magic wand bring vividly before thee by deep and constant meditations thy past glory and bliss, and compare these with thy present degradation. So shalt thou be fired with an irresistible inspiration to rise to thy former, higher, and purer life by breaking the chains by which thou art now bound.

Knowledge, gained by thy present bitter experience of thy Cosmic Existence. The bitter gall and wormwood thou hast been forced to drink, the ten thousand stabs of excruciating pain thou hast endured, the loathsome, degrading company that has surrounded thee and clung to thee, will be more effectual than aught

else to wean thee from this life, this Samsara, and make thee curse the day when thou violated the law of Duality of Being.

Struggle, the secret of liberation, the key to open the prison gates. Neither meditations over the past, nor revulsion of feeling with its disgust over the abominable present, is able to break thy chains, although they supply the strong motives for action. Freedom is gained only by "struggle." This is a fundamental law of Existence.

Purusha learns that it is by daily, unremitting personal efforts, by the pulling up one by one of the desires, passions, and enchantments which have got the mastery over the soul, and have struck their roots deep into his inmost being, that salvation and restoration to freedom can be attained. Duality is again at work. Existence becomes a battlefield, a deadly fight between good and evil, light and darkness, Heaven and Hell. Purusha, *i.e.* the human soul, his eyes now fully open to grasp the true situation, and following the voice of reason, utilises to the full the know-

ledge it imparts of the past, the present, and the future. He fights out the conflict within the soul's secret arena; one by one breaks the threefold cords of destiny; and emerges victorious from the combat. Hell within is at last subdued, every desire uprooted. Prakriti the temptress is crushed for evermore, because no desire for her company exists any longer in Purusha. Again he is free, in possession of the divine beauty which he enjoyed before his miserable alliance with Prakriti. He has regained for Himself his oneness, his independence, and his solitary bliss. Only by an absolute divorce, by an everlasting separation between matter and spirit, can the soul be free and purified from the defiling union with Prakriti and ascend to its native celestial throne.

And now the last stage appears, closing the drama of Cosmic Existence. The world that "was" has disappeared, the spell of Prakriti is broken for evermore. Every desire has been plucked up and destroyed, the pendulum has stopped, and static equilibrium begins.

Pradhana is no longer seen as Prakriti, but as Avyakta.

Kapila says in effect in closing :

Once more happily the day will come for all souls represented by Purusha, when the Duality of Existence again reigns supreme. This lesson, which Purusha in his miseries has learned when passing through "Samsara," will never be forgotten in the bliss of Eternity. Light, Purity, Holiness, Beauty, Joy, and Truth will remain for ever and ever where Purusha dwells. Darkness, Impurity, Wickedness, Ugliness, Sorrows, and Deceit will also remain where Pradhana dwells, but no longer subject to evolution. Henceforth there reigns only an eternal "Avyakta," held fast in adamant chains, existing as a conception, but never more as an Actuality for Purusha.

Kapila's teaching deals with the redemption of the Soul from the burden of Existence. This had arisen by "Desire" and had been consummated by the fatal union of Matter with Spirit, the former being conceived as the symbol of the evil principle in Nature.

In other words, the ultimate goal of human aspiration was not the dream of an absorption into Brahm, but the absolute isolation of the soul from matter, the pure from the impure, good from evil, life everlasting from death everlasting.

Owing to the conception of Spirit and Matter as two opposing, warring Entities, Kapila naturally was unable to find truth in the Unity of the Cosmos. Pessimism was the result. This, indeed, was the keynote of life in India among thinking minds, and is so to a great extent to this day. For very many ages life has not been looked upon in the bright and optimistic way in which the ancient Aryans conceived it, and in which lay their strength, joy, and success. As century after century passed over India, the Brahmans had imbibed the gloomy and superstitious ideas of the non-Aryan population, which outnumbered them by millions. Religion was no longer a thing of joy, but of slavish fear. Earthly existence was given over to demons and evil spirits. Life was a curse which it was

a blessing to get rid of. How the immortal soul of every man, woman, and child could have been imprisoned in this body of clay and placed in a world full of misery, wants, pains, and at last death, was a mystery to every reflecting Hindu. How to get the soul out of this wretched prison-house which stretched into the illimitable future, by the soul's transmigration from one sphere to another, was another and indeed still greater mystery. The Hindu priesthood had their answer: the liberation of the soul was effected by their prayers, intercessions, and sacrifices. Kapila had his answer: the liberation of the soul was the work of man himself. Modern minds see the defects in both answers.

We saw that Kapila dispensed with Iswara or a personal Deity, by substituting in his place souls under the generic name of Purusha. These souls, he taught, filled up all Existence. In this way he accounted for the Cosmos being self-acting, intelligent, and purposeful, with emotions and intellectual capacities, each soul filling its proper place according to its special

capacity in the universal All. In such a system no God was necessary. The Divine was within the Cosmos, consisting not of one supreme Self, but of multitudinous souls, all Divine and all working for the common good. Thus Kapila explains that souls were countless in number, yet individual, sensitive, intelligent, unchangeable, eternal, all divine, co-ordinate in their nature, but otherwise independent of one another. The Brahminic conception was that Existence was under the rule of "One Despotic Being," dwelling far away from human life and without interest in its welfare or progress. Kapila took the opposite view, and made Existence, as it were, a "self-governing commonwealth," where each soul took an absorbing and passionate interest in all that pertained to the whole.

The Monotheistic Religion of Beauty, on the other hand, conceives that it is only by seeing the Divine as Supra-personal in His perfect Beauty that love takes possession of the heart and the secret be solved. It is only by love that victory can be won over

spiritual evils. Therefore it is only by a divine love that the liberation of the soul is achieved. In Kapila's system it was a selfish consideration to get rid of pains and life's evils that appealed to Purusha to strive for freedom. In the modern conception a higher factor comes into play. Love for a Divine Beautiful and Loving Being is the chief motive by which sin and death are overcome.

Kapila's idea nevertheless contained a profound truth. Whereas the Brahmans presented Divinity in its transcending aspect only, and the Atomistic school presented Divinity in its multitudinous personal aspect only, Kapila insisted upon presenting Divinity in its multitudinous immanent aspect. It has been reserved for modern philosophy to combine these three aspects—each in itself one-sided—into a Monism. Kapila, moreover, tried to explain life's mystery by reason alone. To succeed, however, the one key he used was insufficient. Besides the noble entrance hall which he traversed by the use of his key,

another key was necessary—the key of “intuition,” to gain entrance in the inner splendours of the Palace. Even this cannot reveal the inmost sanctuary, which can be opened only by the key of love or the emotional faculty. In this sanctuary shines the divine light of Beauty, Love, Joy, and Truth, all emanating from the Supra-personal Divine Being, the soul’s ideal, whom to be like is the soul’s aspiration and happiness.

From Kapila’s teaching the induction may be drawn that the whole Cosmos, as it appears to us, is ideally produced from self-consciousness, and has no real existence apart from it. To other beings, with different or enlarged faculties, Existence would appear differently from what it does to us under our earthly limitations. In other words, the world exists for us in the form of knowledge, and is an inductive world—our own creation.

Finally working out his system, Kapila described twenty-five substances (Sattvas) in three divisions, with two Essences, of which twenty-four were actively and one, Purusha,

passively operating in the evolution of Nature. Of these the three Gunas or modes stood for the constituent elements of Nature or the triple nature of matter. They are of its essence, and, by entering into its composition, account for the manifested differences in the condition of formal Existence. They were called Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas, and have been variously translated.

“Gunas,” means cords. Nature was conceived as if it were in the form of a cord composed of three varying strands. These were the constituent elements of different degrees—the grosser elements, the organic elements, and the subtle elements. Nature is therefore the triad of qualities or the aggregate of the Gunas. This is the threefold aspect of things. In the case of human beings, the inequalities in their conditions arose from the unequal distribution of the three Gunas, which, in their higher aspect, are Intellect, Volition, and Emotion. Hence when the three Gunas are no longer equally balanced, they make a man clever or stupid, affectionate or selfish, pas-

sionate or good-tempered, according as any of the three preponderate. Tension in the moral, mental, or material world between the three Gunas produce activity and struggle. On the other hand, Equilibrium between the Gunas leads to final rest.

Science in our day has confirmed Kapila's conception, for it is seen now that every particle of matter has what we call three Gunas—"Resistance," "Motion," and "Rhythm." When the equilibrium of the three is disturbed by interaction, then their permutations and combinations produce the endless variety of evolutionary forms found in the Cosmos.

Let me explain a little fuller. Thus Tamas stands for resistance, or the inertia of matter. All matter is fundamentally and always resistant. Its capacity for taking form is due to this constituent. Rajas is motion of matter, the capacity of every particle to change its place and the necessity of its so changing, unless prevented. In scientific phrase, this is motion inherent in matter. Lastly, Sattva is rhythm—the limitation of movement to an

equal distance in an equal time on each side of a fixed point—the power and necessity of what is, in scientific phrase, “vibration.”

In the conception of Purusha's restoration, he is presented by Kapila not only as self-existing, unborn, and undying, but also without all the qualities and functions upon which human life depends. Thus Purusha has no intelligence or consciousness as we understand it, because in humanity these depend upon a nervous system, whereas in the glorified state, where no evolution is at work and the soul is released from the body, desires, which imply want, have all ceased. The eternal bliss is seen in the unruffled state of mind.

Kapila's objection to admitting a Supreme Personal Iswara in his system, in which all the individual souls could be unified and represented, is an old one now, although probably he was one of the first to state it lucidly. It is based upon the existence of misery in the world. To Kapila's pitying heart this problem presented an insoluble riddle, unless Reason realised the Duality of Existence. To him, a

Divine God, who had created and ruled the world, could not possibly escape from the reproach of cruelty, partiality, or incapacity

Another argument was that God must be either bound or free. If God is united to Nature with its sins and sorrows, then He is not perfect. If, on the other hand, God is free from ignorance, evil desires, and malevolence, it only proves that He is "indifferent" to the wails of the world's sufferings, so that in this aspect also God was found to be void of perfections. In either aspect, whether bound or free, God as revealed in the world, by which only reason is able to judge and be guided, was found on examination to be defective, and the conception of an Iswara was useless and even mischievous. Monism and Theism were ruled out of court. Duality gave to Kapila the only key, the satisfactory answer to Reason's questioning, hence Kapila laid as the foundation of his system the one indispensable truth to be granted him, namely, the Duality of Existence; upon this his system is built, by this it stands or falls.

To this view Theism would reply that God is neither indifferent, dependent, or imperfect, nor is He subject to the conditions of mundane existence. On the contrary, He is the divine Author and Controller of it all, and is therefore elevated above anything else, and beyond human criticism. In Himself He is perfect, and must be so in every one of His attributes and creations. At present we cannot grasp Him in His fulness, for we see only a few rays of His glory and His plans, not sufficient to pierce the darkness which surrounds us on every side. But as our capacities expand, so will also our conception of Him become clearer, and more of His flawless beauty and adorable perfections will become visible to us. We must never forget that God is the God of evolution, and that He is engaged in a process, in the act of building. The work is proceeding, the parts are being constructed; we cannot therefore in the meantime see a perfect whole. The fault lies therefore with us, not with God. It is presumption to criticise or find fault with an

Artists's work until it is completed and seen in its fulness. Let us, therefore, have patience and suspend our judgment until the process is completed and the Author's design and execution can be judged as a whole. No doubt God will then justify Himself to us in all He has done, and evoke our admiration, enthusiasm, and delight at the masterpiece of perfect glory and beauty, built upon the immovable foundations of wisdom, truth, justice, and love.

The objection to God's perfection on the score of evil and suffering in the world falls away when it is seen that Existence is based upon the law of Evolution, by which apparent evil is used as stepping-stones, or as spurs to lead to higher good. Moreover, "struggle" is the main factor in life to bring anything to perfection. This applies equally to the soul of man, which in this life is being trained by trials, hardships, and sufferings, as well as by happiness, joys, prosperity, and comforts, with the object that at last a beautiful, God-pleasing character may be evolved. For the highest,

the ultimate asset is after all a noble soul, a lovable, pure, consecrated, and attractive character. This Godlike beauty is the pearl of great price, for it transcends in immortal value everything else in this and other worlds. We follow with admiration the heroic soul as it struggles upwards and onwards beset with difficulties and temptations, yet conquering all by its steadfast love, its triumphant faith, its courageous heart, its lofty aspiration. It seeks its happiness by reaching nobler ideals, and advances to loftier heights on the infinite path of great possibilities and progress, animated all the way by a glorious vision of a coming perfection, by the response to the soul of the Highest, whose transcending beauty makes the soul long to partake more fully of His divine love, which is His glory. This is the goal, the soul's complete rest and satisfaction for evermore in God whom the soul loves and adores, and who loves the soul in return. It is love's victory, Love's everlasting reward.

The soul who admires and loves God feels himself to be, in a sense, God's representative

upon earth, incarnating in some feeble way the separate graces of a beautiful character, which are found in perfection only in God. The thought of this gives a noble purpose to life, to work, and to the aims of the individual beyond the spheres of its transient selfhood.

It therefore becomes our duty to restrain and regulate our egotism that is naturally inclined to look to selfish ends first and foremost, and to consider our individual soul life in its relation to the soul life of all others. Our true life is in mutual dependence, a perpetual giving and receiving, because it is based for our ultimate perfection and happiness as social beings upon the "vicarious principle" everywhere at work. Hence we come to consider our own existence as linked intimately with that of others, and above all with the Soul of All Existence. In accordance, therefore, with God's perfect will and wise loving spirit, the soul regulates its life with its affections, will, and purposes. In this way the soul gradually becomes to others the engaging, attractive expression of God. The more the

soul resembles Him, the less selfish humanity becomes, and therefore the more profitable and attractive to others. The word "holiness" or "wholeness" is better expressed by "perfection" or "perfect beauty," which attracts to itself and illuminates back to others all that is beautiful and estimable, lovable and of good report. It stands for the concentration of all conceivable moral and spiritual excellencies.

As love is the radiant point of all virtues, so it is by love that we realise the unselfish desire that others should also share our joys, should also taste of the divinity of true Beinghood. Hence we ought to impress upon others and cheer ourselves by the thought, that we are raised to highest nobility by our union with God, and thereby destined for a divine, a glorious existence, although as yet we cannot realise the sublime greatness to which we shall advance, reserved for us by the Beloved, when at the end of our race, as His love tokens and royal gifts, a new and glorious Existence opens before our enraptured gaze.

Therefore, in spite of hardships and toils, let us live with an inward freedom of joy, love, and bright gladsome anticipations of a coming glory. In this spirit we conquer best and most easily. Among the tumult of war and strife, our hearts shall yet dwell in peace hopefully, trustfully, joyfully.

Hindu Philosophical Systems

THE YOGA SYSTEM

THE meaning of the word Yoga is primarily “Discipline” or effort towards Nirodha, *i.e.* the suppression of Kitta (the activity of thought); and secondly, “Union,” or likeness to Iswara, *i.e.* the Union between the lower and the higher self.

In fact it conveys three ideas:—

1. A system of ascetic training chiefly by concentration and austerities. The object of this is

2. Emancipation of the Soul (Moksha) from the defiling element of Matter (Prakriti) to which the Soul is chained.

3. Victory. The soul at last by this training (Yoga), being absolutely isolated from all evil, has reached a Union of

“Knowledge,” “Power,” and “Freedom,” the same as Iswara, wherein consists eternal bliss.

The Sutras of Patangali are 198 in number, and arranged in four Padas. Vyasa Bhashya is the authoritative commentary. Samadhi treats of the mental powers, Sadhana treats of the physical powers, Vibhuti treats of the superhuman powers, Kaivalya treats of the soul's isolation, freedom, and blessedness. The whole series is called Samyama.

As Sankhya sought “liberation of the soul by knowledge,” Patangali sought it by “work,” and a most arduous work he made it. He had two objects in view in this:—The “desires” had to be uprooted, as these lead to sorrow and misery; the Yoga was also resorted to in order to ward off all *future* miseries before present desires culminated in actions, for when the evil deed is done, the result cannot be warded off, except by sufferings.

This killing of “desires” took a practical form of a most extraordinary character. It consisted of three forms—meditation, concen-

tration, asceticism—such as penances, fastings, muttering for years the mystic name Om, meditations, concentration of mind upon one single object, prayers without ceasing, difficult postures, tortures of the body, begging; resignation of all life's active work or duties, pilgrimages, vows of silence, living alone in woods and caves, &c. &c.

By these various ascetic exercises liberation of the soul was at last secured. Gradually all defects in the soul were eliminated, such as desires, clinging to life, ignorance, egoism, aversion, ambition, pride, and all sensual lusts. At last by strengthening and getting control over the will and restraining all these desires until they were in perfect harmony with the enlightened will, the soul got separated more and more from Prakriti (the evil spirit in the heart and in the world), to which the soul was fettered through the mind (Chitta).

At last by the ascetic training and by concentration of mind, after having passed through the nine degrees of discipleship, Guana Yoga is reached. Here exercises are carried on only

by the will power, desires have been rooted up, active thoughts extinguished, and "visions" have begun to take place. At this stage the final separation is reached, the last cord is snapped, the soul is free.

Emancipation is now reached. The Yogin becomes a Buddha (Enlightened). By the means of the Yoga or works, the soul is for ever isolated from all evil and free from further transmigrations; it has reached a spiritual separation and freedom, the highest perfection and bliss, and this without priests or outside aid, even without the help of God or Gods of any kind or in any way—all done by Yoga.

But this is not his last word. We have learned that "knowledge" and "work" are required for the soul's salvation. But there is still another cause silently at work shaping for this end, and this is "heart" service. On earth it was "devotion" to Iswara, the perfect one, which animated men and kept them steadfast in their faith, and who was to them the perfect pattern. As devotion to Iswara was the factor which began in contemplation and

imitation of Him, so in the unfettered state of Nirvana it will end at last in "direct perception," and by this their cup of joy and bliss will be filled to the brim, for the heart is satisfied and at rest.

The Gita describes such a Yogin:—

Steadfast as lamp burns, sheltered from the wind,
Such is the likeness of the Yogin's mind,
Sheltered from sense storms, it burns bright towards
heaven.

When it knows the nameless joy
Beyond all scope of sense,
Revealed to Buddha (the emancipated soul),
It deems no other treasure comparable.
Call that state "Peace,"
Call that happy severance "Yoga,"
Call that perfect man "Yogin."

In Kapila's system, the objection was that he had tried to explain existence with two causes instead of three. He had admitted the wheel and the clay, but left out the potter (*i.e.* the efficient agent), without whose presence no utensils could be made. If the world is a process of Evolution, there must be an Evolver of it.

Patangali's systems in many ways follows closely Sankhya, but there are two points in

which they differ. The one is that P'atangali declared his conviction of the necessary existence of one supreme controller, a being from whom all proceeded, and who presided and ruled over all. Hence his system is often called the theistic Sankhya.

The idea of a Unity underlying all is, however, only attained when the theorising reason obtains the mastery over the untutored imagination which rules in the infancy of man's mental life. It is then felt that we cannot give any account of the creation of the world, except on the assumption that the universe is rational and the outcome of a rational intelligence. The more science advances, the more strongly is this necessity forced upon us. It becomes clear to us, as we investigate Nature, that the conception is one, and all is evidently conforming to one design, hence this beautiful system could have had its origin in no other way than by the purpose and command of one intelligent and all powerful sole cause. The same necessity that proves God's existence, also proves Him to be eternal, immutable, and

perfect in all His attributes, for of necessity there must have been a perfect intelligence to conceive, with perfect wisdom to adapt and with perfect power to execute.

As has been well expressed by an eminent writer: "The highest unity to which the finite can rise, is the unity of a single creative will, the one infinite personal God of Theism. To this unity all multiplicity may be traced back, a unity which contains an infinite fulness of power, wisdom, and love. . . . One Being who is self-existing, self-sufficient, and entirely independent of every excellence in an infinite measure, self complete, while He is the sole and free source of all finite excellencies. . . . An infinite and eternal Being we cannot conceive of, merely as a power, or motion, or as material, but it may well be conceived, and indeed the deep thinker is forced to conceive it, as spiritual and as supra-personal, for personality is the very highest conception of the mind; yes, the highest excellence that we can conceive is still the highest personality, a living, personal, holy, and loving God, the

absolute, infinite mind, the centre in which everything rests."

Patangali, in conceiving the "efficient cause" of the world's existence, meets Kapila half way. He does not call the cause "Brahm" but "Iswara," the "Soul of the world." This Iswara is distinct and superior to all other Souls; is in fact the first and highest of all, and is also called "Adi Purusha" (the first Purusha). This Iswara was conceived very much as the Brahmans had described Brahm, but he was conceived as *personal*. But like a "Recluse," who had retired from this world's bustle and troubles with which he had no further concern, Iswara was unaffected by the ills with which human beings were beset, unconcerned with good or bad deeds or their consequences, lost in abstract thoughts and profound meditations. Clouds and darkness surrounded his throne; yet one thing only was certain. His bliss consisted in holding "aloof" from all other Souls. His abode in Eternity was "*Solitude*"—there He lived His own divine life of passivity.

This "Iswara" was also conceived like Brahm as eternal, omniscient, and unlimited, to whom was given the sacred syllable of "Aum" or "Om." The unceasing repetition of this syllable with silent meditations on its profound and mystical meaning was incumbent on all Yogins or disciples. Extraordinary superstitious notions have gathered round this sacred syllable.

Patangali's chief object was not so much to defend the theistic argument of a God, as it was to follow up and expand for practical purposes the clue given by Kapila, namely, that the "liberation of the soul of man" was independent of Deities above or of priests on earth, and that it solely depended upon a man's own life, conduct, and efforts. Patangali's system was therefore planned to show how through "efforts" the separation of Good and Evil in the heart of each disciple could be brought about, and how to attain thereby, through the *union* of Knowledge, Power, and Freedom, to the soul's eternal bliss, namely, likeness to Iswara, the pure, unsullied one, the

pole star and pattern of all their life's strivings as Yogins.

The "Soul's Union with God" as understood in modern thought, and not in the defective way conceived by Patangali, is a beautiful conception, if it avoids the error generally made by the Brahmans of making it synonymous with "Absorption" of the soul, instead of realising that the glory of man's union with God consists in his being one with God in a union of thoughts, will, and desires; in other words, in becoming morally and spiritually one with God. This union does not mean, however, that man is to lose his consciousness in the Divine consciousness, but that we consciously and willingly lose or give up our short-sighted, imperfect, and egoistic self-will in the wiser and more perfect Divine will in which we cannot err. Thus emancipated, we rise to the heights of true self. In this is bound up Divine bliss, and thus we become sharers in God's exceeding joy, because our characters and aims become identical with His. It is,

therefore, a true and real union of heart and life, founded upon love and a realisation of love. Hence God becomes in our conscious, personal life the All in All, in the sense of another higher Self within us and yet above our own. This conception is far removed from the absorption or extinction of the individual conscious soul in the Universal Soul, as believed by the Vedantists and by most of the Hindus of theirs and subsequent ages.

Patangali's plan for attaining the soul's liberation was based upon "training." He wished to teach humanity by a specific training, which embraced their bodily, mental, and moral faculties, how to gain eternal happiness which consisted in "*Moksha*" or freedom from life's trammels and degradations.

Yet, in spite of his desire to do good, he and earlier teachers of Yoga have unwittingly brought more needless pains and sufferings into the lives of humanity in India than any one has ever done either before or since his time. Patangali's mistake arose chiefly from

the conceptions held in India in those ages regarding Psychology. Man was supposed to be a duality, and hence the soul came to be considered as an entity (Purusha) which dwelt by itself within the human body. In itself the soul was considered to be pure, divine, and a spark of the Eternal, but during its tenement in a human body it was held in bondage through the mind (Chitta) to Prakrita the evil principle; hence its sufferings and its longing for relief.

Kapila had pointed out that the way to liberation was by the acquirement of knowledge, and Patangali followed it up by teaching that unless theorising knowledge leads to "practical" results no salvation of the soul could be expected. This practical aspect has given vitality to his system, for it meant, first, certain rules, and then a proper training to carry them out. He taught that when the fivefold Avidya of the Chitta had been destroyed, the soul would be liberated and reach Kaivalya (*i.e.* the absolute isolation of the soul from matter or evil). He adopted

the views prevailing in his time with regard to the high value of asceticism and the mysterious powers which could be acquired by its practice. He elaborated these rules, and described at length in his Sutras the means of attaining concentration, and how it could be carried to the highest point by mental concentration (Raja Yoga), practical training (Kriya), forcible training (Hatha).

These are disciplines for subduing all the desires and passions arising from worldly surroundings and a depraved mind. The Yogin (disciple) who at length by magic communions approaches nearer Iswara, takes the precedent of all others, such as the Sannyasin (renunciators) and Yati (ascetics), who wish to accomplish the same by renunciation of the world and by severe self-mortification. Muni are silent ascetics, and Bhikshu and Cramana are beggars.

It is hardly possible for any one in this country to realise what frightful and prolonged sufferings and self-mortifications such training carried out methodically for the best

part of a lifetime have brought upon millions and millions of unfortunate Hindus during these fully two thousand years, since its formal rise in the second century B.C., although long before this practised also among the non-Aryans. Apart from the actual agonies and sufferings, the natural result was to deteriorate and even destroy the healthy working of the brains of the devotees as well as any members of the body which they submitted to these terrible Yoga practices. In untold cases this training or asceticism brought on disorders of the brain, ecstatic aberrations, hallucinations, trances, idiocy, madness, or other mental derangements, and suicide. In short the training, if conscientiously carried out, led to the paralysis of the thinking and emotional faculties, as well as of the bodily members.

There were nine stages of discipline and eight mental exercises, with further rules for physical practices and bodily gymnastics. The object of them all was to devote the soul to abstract meditations, undisturbed by the world around or by passion within, or to concen-

trate the mind on particular objects, such as fixing the eye steadily on the tip of the nose, or meditating on the sacred word Aum or Om. If long continued it led to trances, ecstasy, or cataleptic conditions. The object of it all was by leading the mind to utter vacuity, and suppressing the functions of the thinking principle, to destroy one of the most important Avidya by which the soul was chained to Samsara.

As regards bodily asceticism (Tapas), such as fastings and severe penances, much in vogue with a view to producing superhuman powers, Patangali added now two other important means of freeing the soul from earthly trammels, the posture of the body, and breathing exercises.

Of the former he described eighty-four different postures (Asanas), of which ten are specially recommended, including contortions of the limbs continued for many years, protracted bodily stiffness and fixity of look, &c. The second, namely regulation of the breathing (Pranayomna), consisted in long continued

suppression of respiration with various other painful efforts; turning the tongue back towards the throat for hours and days; and many more tortures.

The fundamental idea, as remarked, was that man should renounce the world of sense and strive after truth by concentration of the mind, especially by concentrating the mind on abstract meditations and by practising bodily mortifications. Renunciation from deed, word, even from thought, makes the "Saunyasi" or complete Ascetic. In these ways it was thought that a person would gradually get complete control of his senses and passions and thus more easily overcome evil desires, which chained the soul to the corrupt nature through the Chitta.

The British Aryans, since they came upon the scene in India, have done much to check these insane, dangerous, and horrid practices. Thus they have prohibited the grosser performances, such as suspending the body by hooks in the raw flesh, reclining for years on sharp iron spikes, roasting their limbs, &c.

The practical and benevolent spirit of the British Aryans will gradually overthrow these practices, for although there is of course truth in Patangali's teaching that we should cultivate self-restraint, tranquillity of mind, and resignation to the will of God, there is no reason for going to the wild extremes of the Yoga followers who practise these cruel rites under the impression that thereby they effect the purification of self and the separation of the soul from the body.

The belief of training the mind when carried to the absurd and shocking length of the Yogas, becomes a huge delusion, and has done an enormous amount of grievous harm. Only modern science can put a stop to this, by teaching the Hindus the psychology of the soul and its true connection with the body, and by introducing among them a higher religious faith, which will drive away these and other superstitious notions. They will then, by taking Kapila's advice, and enthroning reason as the sole arbiter, realise that the true liberation of the

soul in this life consists in cultivating mind and body to the highest state of efficiency, and they will see that it is a fatal mistake to mar or destroy the beautiful temple in which the soul dwells as God's viceregent upon earth, and wherein He deigns also to take up His abode.

Patangali's conception has also become a fertile source of maintaining and even increasing the superstitions of the Hindus. By practising the Yoga the Hindus came to believe in the possibility of acquiring by mesmeric trances the command over seen and unseen powers, in proportion as the soul was released from the bondage of mind and body. It was claimed by these Yogins that by the mystic union of their soul with Iswara, or in proportion as they became like Him, they had the control over matter, space, and time, having acquired magical or supernormal powers. They also claimed to work miracles, deaden sensibility, prolong endurance to an incredible extent, lengthen life, and resist hunger and thirst with control over the

vital organs. Their souls were believed to be able to traverse all space, to know past and future events, to animate dead bodies, to exercise power over evil spirits, to cure maladies and afflictions, to make themselves invisible at will, to see things invisible to others, and to hear sounds, voices, and warnings from distant worlds. Finally, by practising Yoga zealously and perseveringly, it was believed that they would be exempt from being born again after death, which was and is still considered the greatest blessing of all.

In this way, life came to be held in contempt, and by self-torture men expected to reach "self-mastery" over their bodies and minds, over powers whether in earth, in heaven or hell, visible or invisible.

The simple Hindus with their love of the marvellous have swallowed readily and greedily these wild pretensions of the Yogins. Nowadays these gifts are mostly claimed only by deluded devotees, chiefly Ascetics with disordered brains, or by impostors such as charlatans and conjurers who extort money

from the natives when at the fairs or on their pilgrim journeys.

You must remember that the Yogins have the idea of attaining unbounded power over nature by ascetic practices. The Western nations seek these by the aid of science.

The Yogins' belief is that Renunciation or detachment from the world is the only possible mode of a holy life, whereas the Western nations seek it by altruistic works as well as by living a holy life, believing that the spiritual health and progress of the soul is possible only by keeping the body and its powers in a healthy condition; also like the Yogins they renounce evil habits and evil thoughts, words and deeds.

The Monotheistic Religion of Beauty does not believe that monkhood or celibacy are at all necessary for a holy life; on the contrary, it has often quite the opposite effects. A true philosophy of happiness, freedom, and health depends less upon the possession of wealth than upon the reasonable regulation and limitation of our desires; hence to live the latter

is according to nature and for our own good.

A Yogin is a "Saint," but this word will have a rather different meaning in the transformed Hinduism, the Religion of Beauty. Saintliness in this latter aspect will be the highest form of moral and spiritual beauty of character. It will give life its subtlest charms and refine all coarseness. True saintliness is a beautiful character which is made manifest by the sincere love and admiration it bears towards God, with love, tenderness, and helpfulness towards mankind.

Such a saint sees in God the ideal beauty, the perfect life, the unselfish love, and compassion which exceed all comprehension. Such a presentation of God satisfies man's highest conceptions, captivates the heart and mind, and by love's sweet persuasion kindles the longing to be like this beautiful and attractive Being, and thus try to gain His approval in everything.

A saint of this type carries in his mind some of the wisdom of God, and in his heart some

of the love of God. His soul is therefore clothed with the beauty of humility, yet aspires and longs for still further advance in the heavenly life, with helpful love and compassion to others; with self-sacrifice to lift mankind to higher and worthier conceptions of God. A true saint lives in the pure atmosphere of faith and love to God, of tenderness and affection towards all mankind. No lover on earth is more anxious for daily and hourly communion with the Beloved who fills all his thoughts and desires, than the saint who rejoices in living in the atmosphere of constant communion with the one who has captured the love, homage, and admiration of his soul for eternity.

Therefore, such a saint rejoices daily in the realised presence in his soul and the guidance of it by the Beloved, whose smiles of approval gladden his heart, strengthen his will, and cheer him to persevere to the end. Indeed the presence of God in the soul is an inexhaustible fountain of inspiration to both the humblest and the loftiest saint. Life is

difficult to each and all; sorrows, trials and losses meet every one, and in all spheres; but the saint has the advantage that everything which is difficult for reason to understand is solved by reposing an unfaltering trust in the almighty Being of love, tenderness and beauty. As the darkest clouds can be traced to be the children of the sun, but have yet their benevolent and precious uses, so our darkest afflictions have their source in God, the Sun of our souls, our Beloved, who knows how to bring light out of darkness, joy out of mourning.

The saint finds God (beautiful in His perfect love) to be the foundation of all his hopes, the object of his unfailing trust, the subject of his deepest love, the inspiration of his life, the model of his conduct and dispositions, the joy of his soul. He cannot hide being a lover of God, for true love always translates itself into likeness with the Beloved. Love ennobles and sanctifies life, kindles enthusiasm, redeems the world. Humanity is like an instrument out of tune, it yields but harsh and shrill music.

The lover of God tries to retune every silver cord in human lives and hearts, to make them vibrate with the harmonies of heaven. For us to be Godlike we must partake of His beautiful, lovable character; for the perfect life is that which is perfect love.

A true Yogin in India is looked upon as a saint, as one who has left everything to seek for a perfect life, and as such we ought to sympathise with him. Our duty should be to point out to him, that while his aim is praiseworthy from the point of view of transformed Hinduism, or what we may best describe as the Religion of Beauty, his conception of the meaning of a saint is in many respects totally different from modern and higher views.

He looks upon the body as a prison house for the soul, and a curse to be connected with, whereas it is now seen to be really the most exquisite organ of the soul and given to bring all the faculties of the mind and soul to their highest efficiency. Instead, therefore, of injuring and gradually destroying the body, it ought to be cultivated, nourished,

and developed, so as to fit it for the important work for which it was destined.

Again, the Yogin is of opinion that his soul's release from this so-called vile body and the ultimate perfection of his soul can only be obtained when all desires or instincts implanted in us are crushed along with all the mind's faculties. It is, however, a mistake to think that our desires or our affections are barriers to the soul's perfection or union with God. On the contrary the soul's victory over the world is made by the due regulation and control of all these desires. Our highest attainments are reached by their proper employment, not by their destruction.

Finally, if you meet an advanced Yogin saint or Ascetic in India, he will appear to you as if never a smile had lit up his face. He seems the incarnation of misery, pessimism, and exclusiveness. His whole mind being bent upon the salvation of his own soul, he has no room for anything else. The joy of others finds no response in his dark and troubled mind. You feel as if he, with the

rest of the world, were in the grasp of a powerful spirit of evil which nothing humanity can do could ever overcome or drive away. The result of such a faith is just what you might expect in those who live under its influence. It brings darkness and despair. Happily, it is only a nightmare.

The very opposite is, however, seen in a lover of God grown up in the sunshine of the Religion of Beauty. The hall-mark of such a saint is seen by his sunny spirit, by his unceasing and heartfelt silent praises arising from gratitude, as love-gifts to his Maker. It is seen in his cheerfulness and helpful spirit to all around him. Even his unconscious influence is an inspiration for good and for cheer to others, and his buoyant, optimistic spirit brings light and joy into his own soul. He realises that a cheerful spirit honours God and thereby recommends his beautiful religion to others. A saint's cheerfulness arises from a constant feeling of thankfulness to God and an unshaken trust in Him, that all will be well when God has the directions of his

steps through life. A saint's cheerfulness is perfectly consistent with the dignity of reason and an earnest, manly, strenuous character.

A saint is like a careful gardener who is diligently rooting out as soon as they begin to sprout the weeds of discontent, evil passions, pride, and envy, as if allowed to grow they would choke or destroy the beautiful flowers in the heart, in which all the graces and spiritual attractions of a Godlike character are represented.

Cheerfulness, as its name implies, takes a cheery view of life, even at its worst, and with strong faith in the love and protection of God, faces every ill with indomitable pluck and fortitude.

Throughout history, in all nations where pessimism and sloth had eaten into their vitals like cancer, the downward course began which made them a prey to others; whereas the nations who were optimistic, who took a cheerful and courageous view of life, were ever in the van of the world's progress. Every defeat only spurred them on to fresh exer-

tions, and in the long run their energy and brave, buoyant, cheerful spirit won the day. They became the world's leaders. Such a hopeful, courageous, and cheerful trait of character in a saint also glorifies God and makes Him attractive and desirable to the whole world. A religion which brings joy to all who taste of its fountains of bliss, where the members reflect in some degree the beauty and the glory of the Highest in His attractive, loving, and beautiful character, is worth having, is worth spreading to the utmost ends of the earth. It lifts mankind to higher levels of perfection, to a foretaste of the loving communion with the best and dearest of all Beings to whom the lowliest, the worst specimen of humanity may approach and verily none shall be cast out. The heart of divine overflowing love, tenderness, and skill knows how to heal the broken-hearted, how to cleanse and change the character of the unlovely, the vile, and the depraved. God is the heavenly husbandman who knows how to transplant and revive the drooping, crushed,

soiled, and dying plants, and behold they shall yet bloom in everlasting beauty and fruitfulness to the praise and glory of the Highest.

A Yogin saint by the necessity of the case has the strong tendency to become the incarnation of selfishness, whereas a saint of the transformed Hinduism lives for others' welfare as well as for his own. He realises the solidarity of the whole human race, and that in the happiness of others lies his own happiness. He therefore puts himself in the place of others, and feels for them as part of himself, and all as part of God. This is the only point of view which will save the world from the curse caused by callous selfishness and wickedness.

Two other causes are at work strongly influencing the Yogins. The one is the belief in the transmigration of souls, the other is the belief in the Karma as expounded by the Brahmans.

As both of these beliefs are treated of in

my former work under "Buddhism," I need not here lose time over them, except to say that both ideas being taken from a narrow individual point of view are thereby defective and misleading.

Very often even the strongest arguments have little effect on minds strongly prejudiced in an opposite direction, unless precedence can be quoted of sufficient weight and authority. Now this is fortunately the case here, for in their revered Vedas which are to them the Alpha and Omega of all truth there is not one word to support these ideas, so that the Yogins get no countenance from this quarter, which to them is final. In fact, these beliefs, upon which the Brahmans raised their ecclesiastical structure, and which no doubt they thought were convincing and true as explaining life's mysteries, have been taken from the corrupt Dravidian worship along with many other errors and idol worships, all of which ought now to be thrown overboard as erroneous and wicked. Only by doing this will the gifted Brahmans and the earnest Yogins

be worthy sons of their noble ancestors. A new transformed Hinduism erected upon the basis of their forefathers' spiritual worship, with an elimination of all that is inconsistent with a Religion of Love, Purity, and Beauty will be their glory and their salvation.

Moreover, the way of "salvation" differs completely in the two aspects.

The Yogin saint seeks perfection, as we saw, in the way of "works," and willingly undergoes the severest mortification and bodily tortures for this end of gaining his soul's liberation and to enter a world of bliss. It is a lifelong, trying, dreadful work, and calls forth a man's highest resolution. At the end, if successful, he emerges from the fight with his inborn desires and passions uprooted and destroyed, together with impaired mental faculties. He is a wreck of humanity, useless to himself and others, but with a pride which knows no bounds, and an egoism which nothing can unbend. He is proud because by his own unaided efforts and sufferings he has conquered himself; with bleeding feet and crucified body

he has reached Nirvana. As a conqueror he expects to enter heaven, and like Iswara his model, his bliss is to be solitary for ever. Kaivalya (standing alone or aloof) is his state of mind. Self-sufficient to himself, and independent of others, he is unconcerned like Iswara with good or bad deeds. He is without qualities, and therefore also without sympathies for others. He is alone with his pride, his egoism, and his own superlative merits. The bliss he enjoys at last is dwelling in heaven *alone*, aloof from all others, sunk in meditations like Iswara for ever. Such a bliss, however, would to most others be the worst of all punishments.

On the other hand, the saint in the Religion of Beauty has also a life to discipline and a soul to save, but he has higher conceptions of what the soul's perfection really means, and what the Yogin is toiling after. To the saint the perfection of character is the standard of the heavenly life. This to which humanity is called is so lofty because it is God's own perfection. Hence it is clearly impossible for any one on earth to reach it.

It is a perfection which, although it may be seen as an ideal to be striven after, is a reality which in our present state of limitations we can never by any possibility hope to reach.

The saint does not, however, therefore lower the standard as the Yogin does, or give up the attempt altogether. He realises that though the far distant peak cannot be ours, the *road* towards it concerns us here; in other words, it is the "spirit" in which a man strives that counts in this race for perfection. Therefore instead of living the life of dreary work like a slave, as the Yogin does, the saint looks upon life as a trust from God, to use it to best advantage, and to gain His approval. The way is often dark and difficult, but the saint is not downcast, for when God has entered into the soul to guide and rule it, life becomes a willing service of love. The saint does not keep a debit and credit account, estimating the value of each action and striking the balance to see if he is on the right side; his life and work become a thanksoffering to God's praise, and he is only sorry that he

cannot give or do more to show how much he would like to manifest in action his love for the Beloved.

And as for heaven, the saint realises that God's transcendent kingdom of glory and splendour can never be claimed by any son or daughter of earth as a lawful possession—as a right because on earth his good deeds exceeded his evil ones. Heaven with the soul's glorification and bliss can only be got as an undeserved, a royal gift, heaven's love-token. Best of all with this, God Himself is secured as the highest gift of all. In His presence, in His company, to be filled with the treasures of his beauteous, lovable character, to be more like Him—this is the culmination of the soul's happiness and joy, and will be so through all eternity.

Consequently as the saint is neither vain nor proud, he realises that all that he has is undeserved, all he can do is imperfect. Therefore in this soil there grows the beautiful flowers of humility, self-effacement, tenderness, compassion, and helpfulness to others. Above

all, the heart is ever tuned to praising God for the manifold gifts of the past as of the present, and still more for the promised inconceivable glorious gifts yet to be revealed.

In the soul there is, therefore, always a loving dependence upon another, a warm enthusiasm for another. A lover's anxious thoughts what best to do, say, and plan to give pleasure to the one whom his soul loves passionately. Therefore for His sake he renders willing, cheerful work for others in their need. And so the earthly life passes away for the saint, and as he stands at the boundary and looks back he sees that it has been mercy, grace, and love-tokens from God, from start to finish. And who can doubt that as he enters the beautiful home above, there too will be grace, mercy, and showers of blessings, yet all undeserved, not as wages for anything done, but because the unseen guest in the chamber of his heart on earth is still his best and dearest friend and lover. Now he is the guest in His home above, and lo! what wonders, what joys, what treasures are

His, who is the God of beauty and love. Yes, the saint has reached heaven, but he is *not* alone.

The last point I shall refer to in connection with the Yoga system is "Iswara." Here at last there are some points of agreement.

The Yogin saint has before his mind a Being to worship of majesty, of purity, and perfection, yet personal. This is uplifting and true, but there is one serious drawback in this conception, for "Iswara," although in a sense personal, is not one who responds to the "Devotion" or reverence due to Him. He is silent, unconcerned with the world's weal or woe, lost in his own meditations, and only taken up with himself regardless of others. Hence his influence over his devotees lose half their effects. On the other hand, the saint of the transmuted Hinduism worships a Being who is far above the conception of Iswara, being the All in All, blessed for evermore, transcendent and immanent, but also the only true and perfect personality.

His personality, however, is like all true

personality of the "social" type, and in this consists His value and preciousness to the human soul. Into every heart, even the humblest, He desires to be invited to be its companion, its guide, its comforter, its sustainer, to be everything to it in this life and in the life to come, yea, to be its dearly beloved and honoured guest, its All and All. The bonds of love formed here between God and the soul will be carried over to the unseen world, glorious beyond all description, there to grow stronger and to endure for ever, the soul being one with the Beloved in His life, His character, His lofty benevolent purposes for the endless happiness and worthiness of each and all. So shall all become one in the glory and intensity, in the joy and ecstasy of a love which lasts through eternity; a love not selfish, but a love social while also personal, yea, where the warm social affections get full play, where heart answers to heart, and soul to soul. In this is our highest conception of Heaven.

Hindu Philosophical Systems

THE PURVA MIMANSA SYSTEM

It is always interesting to meet with a sterling personality, who is able with zeal and ability to defend his religious convictions. Such a man Gaimini or Jaimini appears to have been. In him we find the stout defender of the ancient Vedic faith and philosophy as against the encroachment of the non-Aryans' debasing worships. He and other noble and devout Aryans saw that these innovations were threatening to overthrow their ancient purer faith. Well would it have been for his contemporaries and the following generations of Aryans if they, like him, had stoutly resisted all the encroaching idolatrous practices around them, with their licentious, superstitious, and cruel worships. It is these

how
which have kept India in spiritual darkness, degradation, and stagnation.

We have seen that the authors of the other philosophical systems had been trying as their chief aim to answer the anxious question of the Hindus, how a soul could attain liberation or eternal blessedness, and whether he could find the way to this by human reason alone.

Gaimini's object in writing his Sutras was the same, but he took a different course, for while the others took "nature" as their text, and "reason" as their guide, Gaimini took a higher step. He took the ancient "Vedas" as his text, and "Divine reason" as revealed therein to be his guide. This put him in a difficult position, for while on the one hand he had to defend himself against the Atheistic or Agnostic schools, he had on the other hand to defend himself against the proud Brahmans, who, being now at the height of their power, claimed that only through *them* and their system of intercessions, rites, and sacrifices, could the soul of a Hindu ever reach blessedness or liberation of the soul.

You see, therefore, that the first party trusted to reason, the second party trusted to the "Vedas," the third party trusted to their forty sacraments.

Let us now try to follow Gaimini's train of thoughts. His Sutras are divided into twelve portions or books, and Shabara's Bhashya is the authoritative commentary.

Various opinions were held even at that time as to the veneration to be paid to the Vedas, more especially the Rig. Gaimini represented the extreme school of conservative and devout Aryans who received these holy scriptures, not only as "inspired" through their poets, but as being Brahm himself revealed to the Aryans; hence their transcendental value. Only by this lofty conception could the Vedas be restored to their rightful and exalted rank; by this only could be stemmed the growing tide of formalism, superstition, idolatry, and irreligion; by this only could the mystery of Existence or the philosophy of Nature find its true explanation.

The first claim that Gaimini made on behalf

of the Vedas was that Brahm in his manifestation was “Sabdabrahma.” The word “Sabda” is derived from Sabdita (to be named). It has a twofold meaning. It stands for Vak or the divine Word, or Ucchvasita (breath of the Supreme) equivalent to “Logos,” and also for its manifestation in the world, *i.e.* “by Sound.” Both Gaimini considered as eternal and co-existent with the Deity:—“Sabdo yonit vad Brahma.” Hence if the Vedas were the “words” of Brahm, as all true Aryans admitted, it followed that they were lifted into the Godhead and became “Sabdabrahm.” Upon this foundation he could easily prove that the Vedas existed eternally in the mind of Brahm as Vak (the unspoken divine word).

Thus in the Satapatha Brahmana, xiv. 5, the Vedas are the breathings of the Great Being. In the Taittiriya Brahmana, ii. 85, Vach (Speech) is “the mother of the Vedas.” In the Taittiriya Brahmana, ii. 5, the Vedas issued from “the mouth of Brahma.”

The Divinity of the Vedas, as reflected in

Nature, is expressed by a modern Hindu poet as follows:—

They are engraved in the starry heavens.
They are kneaded into the mould of the earth.
They are written in the beams of the sun.
They are seen in the light of the moon.
They are in the flashes of lightning.
In short, they are always with Brahm,
Who fills All in All.

Gaimini, therefore, pointed out to the Brah-^{we a}
mans the folly of idolatry, or the worshipping ^{was}
of stocks and stones, reptiles, demons, or any ^{God}
of Nature's phenomena. None of these, or all ^{the}
these put together, could represent Brahm.

The only true and complete "spiritual incarnation of Brahm was seen to be the "Vedas."
This being so, it followed:—

1. The Vedas only regulated divine worship.
2. The Vedas only regulated the laws for individuals and society.
3. The Vedas only explained the way to eternal blessedness.

From these postulates it followed again that the duty of man as a religious subject was literally to carry out all the Vedic injunctions,

which were simplicity itself compared to those intricate and manifold ones advocated by the new-fangled doctrines of the Brahmans. Religious duties of any kind, according to Gaimini, cannot rest on human authority, but only on the "Vedas," which he claimed to be super-human, eternal and infallible. Gaimini drew up, therefore, a doctrine of philosophy of duty from the Vedas, based chiefly on the Aryans' sacrificial ritual.

It was for this reason that Gaimini dwelt so much upon the "Karmakanda" in minute detail, this being the first portion of the Veda which relates to the duties (Dharma) of sacrifices. For this reason also his work is called "Purva," or "first," because the sacrificial part was first studied by the Hindus.

It was also called "Mimansa," not only because it meant "reflections," but also it meant to "decide." In other words, Gaimini sought to bring the Brahman priesthood back to the Vedas which had now receded into the background of their worship, to revere it, to study it, to obey its injunctions and rites, to

make it in short to be the "*decider*" as to what constituted true worship and true philosophy.

Instead of reaching liberation of soul or bliss by the Brahmans' intercessions, or the philosophers' even more difficult acquisition of the requisite "knowledge," Gaimini simply stated in the old-fashioned Aryan dictum, that if any Aryan wanted the preparation of heart to enjoy eternal bliss, it could only be obtained by honestly performing the duties or work laid down in the Vedas. One important truth he also taught (by which he overthrew both the Brahmans' and Philosophers' pretensions) was, that "Heaven" after all was not a reward for "works" done of any kind. Hence nobody ought to trust in these to gain "eternal bliss." It was a "pure gift" from Brahm, undeserved by all, too glorious to be claimed as a right by any mortal. You will perceive from this the excellency of Gaimini's religious philosophy, and its vast superiority over all idolatrous worships in India.

To sum up, Gaimini revealed:—

1. The soul's direct access to Brahm.

2. The revelation of Brahm's will is only found in the Vedas.

3. Hence the duty of obedience to their precepts.

4. No transmigration of Souls.

5. Eternal bliss, the free gift of Brahm.

In these we have a purer, a more spiritual worship than is found elsewhere in India. It is a pity that the later Brahmans stopped their ears to its teaching and only gave it a "decent burial" by admitting it into Darsana as a harmless extravagance.

Gaimini had next to unveil the mystery of Existence, the philosophy of Nature by Sabda-brahm. This attempt has been ridiculed by many, ignored by most, and yet some 2000 years later Gaimini has been found to have uttered some profound truths in the usual Eastern symbolic language regarding the solution of the riddle.

By other philosophers the creation of the world was assigned to "atoms," but Gaimini makes a still more profound suggestion. The creation of the world is made by "Sound," not

sound to the range of which the human ear is susceptible, not even "Akasa," or the sound which has Ether for its substance, but "Sabdabrahm" (*i.e.* Brahm) Himself by His divine word or command, who is the world's Creator. Modern thinkers will admit the profound truth embedded in this conception. Indeed, Gaimini anticipated the modern world, for while Brahm as Neuter is God transcending all, as Sabdabrahm it is seen as God immanent, while as Vak the "word," it is realised as God, the ideal or perfect Personality, to whom the human heart can turn in all its joys and sorrows without the aid of any priesthood whatever. Hence, "Vak" is a feminine word, thus portraying God, the Personal One, as a mother with all a mother's love, tenderness, sympathy, and mercy. You will see in the Rig, x. 125, the hymn ascribed to her as the Consort of Brahm, also Sat, xiii. 8, xi. 1, 18. All was made by Vak; hence you find also the name as Vakas-pati or Brihaspati, the Lord of Speech, the Word or creative power. The dogma of the Eternity of Sound was afterwards

developed in the Yoga theory of the imperceptible and eternal element inherent in every word as the vehicle of its sense, called Sphūta.

As a Monotheist, Gaimini wished by erecting the "Vedas" as a revealer of Sabdabrahm, to abolish all proxies, whether so-called Deities, Priests or Idols, as channels of worship. To him Brahm in his fulness was revealed in the Vedas. He did not of course mean that the literal books should be worshipped, but the spirit revealed therein, namely the sublime character which Brahm is invested with as Sabda Brahm. It was therefore to be a spiritual worship.

Another outstanding feature of the worship is that it must be based upon "sacrifices," because God's beautiful character is seen by His perpetual "giving." Hence to be like God we must share this fundamental trait of His character, willing to make sacrifices for His sake on behalf of others, willing for His sake to sacrifice our own passions and evil inclinations, so as to be like Him in His winning Beauty of Soul. This perpetual giving or

making sacrifices arises from one source, and that is because "Love" in its most glorious aspect and fulness belongs to God. Hence it is by a perpetual sacrifice, by imposing limitations upon Himself in connection with the Universe, that its creation was made possible and its glorious future assured, and it is therefore only by struggles and sacrifices that humanity's glorious future is also assured.

Now as human beings we can only conceive God under the highest aspect known to us, and hence we are compelled to postulate the "personality" of God as far as humanity's dealings with Him are concerned, while recognising at the same time His immanence in the world and His transcendency over the world. God's personality is, of course, not subject to human limitations. We may say that God is the only complete personality, and that humanity, as yet, has only an imperfect comprehension of what true personality really is.

Let us consider the conception of Brahm in its "Immanence," or as Sabdabrahm, by whom the world was called into being, by

whom it is sustained, by whom it is changed into new forms.

The first question Gaimini has to answer is in what way or upon what principle was the world created. Again he answers by "Sound," for nature is found to be scaled like an instrument on a common principle of harmony or musical proportion, which involves a threefold arrangement.

1. Sound or vibration of Ether, to give the material basis.

2. Intellect or Vak, to give it form and quality.

3. Soul, to appreciate and enjoy its beauty.

Thus, in short, Gaimini justified his claim to solve the world's riddle. The Cosmos is like a symphony of rarest beauty, perfect in every note, arrangement, and composition. It has a material basis, used by the Spirit (Vak) for the soul's advancement, happiness, and delight.

In later times this conception was found in India developed by other thinkers. Thus the Cosmos was represented by them as a celestial

lyre. Vishni was the Divine Creator of sweetest music of the spheres, under which aspect He was known as Beringni.

There is much in this ancient conception of Sabdabrahm being the source and author of harmony upon which the Cosmos is planned and regulated, which is beautiful, true, and poetic. Let us therefore thank Gaimini for this luminous conception, which is still calculated to give food for reflection to the devout mind.

It will be noticed that Gaimini separates himself from the teaching of the Vedanta. He does not postulate the Divine as being fully revealed in everything, but he regards Brahm as being pre-eminently revealed in the sacred words which had been handed down from the revered past. To him and others like him it was there that He was divinely, and with fulness of glory, manifested upon earth, in His character, aim, and purposes, and as the world's ruler. For the sacred words, the Divine words, were spiritual, true, and ever living, whereas the world around them, with

all its glitter, pomp, and vanity, was fleeting, unsubstantial, and vain.

This idea of a "graduated scale" of revelation of Deity is one which should be pondered by those who wish to understand better the working of the Divine plans as seen in the scheme of the Evolution.

With regard to Gaimini's theory of Existence as based upon Sound. Without sound or vibration in Ether nothing may be said to exist. Everything is in constant motion. Now we cannot have motion in matter without generating vibrations, and all vibrations are fundamentally sound scaled and harmonised by a Divine Mind. This is the objective Cosmos. The Hindu thinkers take Ether as the lowest form of Akasa, or the primary substance, and as Ether is the lowest manifestation in connection with our Cosmic or objective system, so Soul is the highest in the subjective Cosmos. In this fundamental Unity all vibrations in the Ether are found to be but modes of motion. Hence sound, light, heat, electricity are all found to be

modes of motion ; and if we had instruments to measure the mechanism of thought and reflex feelings and emotions, it would likely be found to be as true, that also in these lofty or spiritual realms there was the reign of law, the reign of harmony and vibrations.

Strange to think that each element has its own vibratory notes, and that these lie at the root even of inorganic evolution. According to the combination of these notes is the nature of each particle. All is founded upon "numbers," so that, as I have mentioned in my former work, the Cosmos is seen to be founded on principles of harmony, or in other words, upon the sciences of arithmetic, geometry, and mathematics. Thus, as in arithmetic, all "Sounds" are built upon "numbers," and on a most exact scale. Colours are also built upon "numbers."

You will recognise this if you remember that the seven primitive vibrations of sound in the scale are found to be in *Trillions* per second : C, 259 ; D, 287 ; E, 322 ; F, 343 ; G, 385 ; A, 427 ; B, 483 ; while the seven

vibrations of light are found in *Billions* per second to be: Red, 476; Orange, 511; Yellow, 546; Green, 588; Blue, 630; Indigo, 665; Violet, 721.

The beauty of sound, light, and colours is not merely intellectual, but moves the heart and soul. In all are infinite resources of consolation, joy, and bliss for humanity.

Time will not permit me to follow further Gaimini's interesting speculations bearing upon the mystical aspect of the "Vedas," as revealed in Vak or the Divine Word, and in the Spiritual world, and as "Sound" or "Vibrations" — the medium of continued creation by Evolution in the whole gamut of Existence in the material world. At your own leisure you should follow up these suggestions, as they contain truth presented as analogies or parables of highest interest to all thoughtful minds.

Hindu Philosophical Systems

THE VEDANTA SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY

LET us now study the last school, the Uttara Mimansas or Second Inquiry, which has influenced and dominated all subsequent religions and philosophical movements in India.

But first let me point out the great difference which exists between the Ancient Hindu Philosophers' treatment of these questions and the Western world as represented in modern times by the British and other Aryans. The superiority and advance in civilisation of the latter are chiefly due to their having early realised and acted upon three great truths:—

1. The supremacy of reason.
2. The control of the imagination.
3. The limitation of human knowledge.

On the other hand, the Hindus acted upon

different principles, and evolved their systems chiefly out of their inner consciousness.

The Vedanta systematises the doctrines and philosophical teaching of the Upanishads. It is still the favourite and most popular system in modern India, as it has been for more than a thousand years. The Rishi who composed the Brahma Sutras or Sariraka Sutras (*i.e.* text-book) is known as Bâdrâyana, surnamed Vyâsa (collector). It contains 555 aphorisms. These were subsequently expounded by the famous Shankara or Samkara in his commentary (A.D. 800). At a later date, the "Vedanta Sara" was produced, which is a compendium of Vedantic principles by S. Yogindra. A still later authoritative or standard work was called "Vedanta Paribhasa."

The Vedanta is considered by many Hindus as one of the most valuable products of the genius of mankind in its search after eternal truth. There is thought, however, to be an earlier and a later school of Vedantists. The old school, called Parinamavadins, believed in the reality of the world of perception, and

that all sprung from Brahm as the material. They explained it with the following simile:—“As a spider throws out its web and draws it back, so is this Universe derived from the undecaying one.” In other words, the world, according to this conception, was made not only *by* Brahm, but also *of* Brahm (from His substance). The subsequent school of Bâdrâyana with its conception of Maya (illusion) or Avidya (nescience) was therefore called Mayavadins or Illusionist. This has since become all powerful in India.

The Vedanta's teaching was drawn from the Upanishads, and these were considered to reveal Divine truth with absolute authority. With this idea as their foundation to build upon, no wonder that these Rishis went wrong from the start. These collections of utterances in the Upanishads contradict each other, and are clearly merely guesses at truth uttered by a number of devout but fallible men. No doubt much precious gold is found, but much more that is worthless.

Bâdrâyana's Sûtras, as mentioned, were

gathered from sayings in the Upanishads. Of these writings 108 are considered the most important, while out of them 12 are called Major (being the most valuable ones), the rest are the Minor.

From these Sutras, Shankara erected a system of philosophy including Theology, Cosmology, and Psychology, or, in other words, doctrines concerning *God*, the *World*, and the *Soul*, which still hold sway in India, as they have done during the last twelve centuries.

Let us now look more closely into the celebrated systems of Vedanta.

Instead of Materialism we encounter Idealism. Besides Brahm's Immanence we learn also of His Transcendency.

Let us follow the steps of advancing thoughts:—

1. The Atomists taught that Brahm was separate from Souls.

2. The Sankhyas taught that Souls accounted for everything; Brahm was ignored.

3. The Vedanta tries to correct both these one-sided conceptions, but only by going to

the other extreme, namely, by positing that Brahm is everything, and everything is Brahm. (See Rig-Veda, Mandala x. 90.)

The Vedanta has given rise to three great and several minor schools, which all appeal to the Sutras of Upanishads as their highest authority.

1. *Non-Duality* or *Advaitam*. The authoritative commentary is by Shankara or Sanskara. He is the Apostle of Absolute Unity, or Monism.

2. *Duality* or *Dvaitam*. The authoritative commentary is by Madhva, who is the Apostle of the Duality of Existence, Dvaita. It insists on the separateness of the (Personal Self) and the Paramatman (the Highest Self). This school is also called Puna Pragna.

3. *Non-Duality qualified*, or *Vishishtadvaitam*. The authoritative commentary is by Ramanuja, who is the famous Apostle of Unity with attributes, or Monism with modifications, i.e. qualified Non-Duality.

4. Vallabha, who advocated the view that the soul "Iiva" is a metamorphoses of Brahm.

He called his system Suddhadvaita, or pure Non-Dualism.

Let us now try to sift out the truth contained in each of these systems. Let us approach them without prejudice or predilection, and in a loving spirit, only anxious to find the truth which is most likely to be found in the "golden mean."

SHANKARA'S SYSTEM

The system of Shankara is the most celebrated. This profound thinker, in order to harmonise the conflicting statements found in the various Upanishads, skilfully constructed two divisions, mutually supporting each other, the one for the few, the other for the many; the one teaching metaphysics, the other theology. His first aphorism expresses the object of the whole system. The desire of knowing Brahm (neuter) or the only existing Being.

Shankara had learned from the Upanishads, that Sat or Satya (which meant the only Reality) is the root of everything. Satya underlies all Existence, not only the objective,

but our subjective Existence. Therefore, all that is real and eternal in us is the Satya, for all comes from it, and will, through knowledge enlightening the road, return to it. A study of Shankara's description of Brahm shows that it is just what is taught in the Upanishads regarding Satya. They both express the highest abstraction of the human mind, both dwell upon the same lofty conception—the One who is eternal and infinite, the One only without a Second, “the absolute Unity.”

When Shankara says that Brahm is All, it must be borne in mind that in previous philosophies the aggregate life of all beings in Existence was said to constitute a fourth part of Brahm, but Shankara teaches that the Divine Spirit is the same in the whole of unconscious Nature, as well as in the whole of the realm of living beings. Yet Deity, although diversified in its manifestation, is not exhausted thereby. Brahm still remains entire, Brahm still transcends all. In short, Brahm alone exists in Reality, all else is Illusion.

We may condense the fundamental axioms upon which the entire system of the Vedanta philosophy is based, into three sentences :—

1. One only without a Second is the true Reality (Ekam evadvitiyam).

2. Hence everything else is Illusion.

3. The Soul is Brahm ('Tat 'Twain Asi).
“Thou art that.”

In these three sentences the Vedantists affirm, is found the true solution of the riddle of Existence. These express to them not only the deepest metaphysics, but also the highest aim of morality.

Shankara, by expressing these thoughts, had a goal in view, and this was to demonstrate the presence of the infinite in the finite, and that the self in man is no other than the Highest Self. In order to illustrate how the Divine is within the Soul, but without the Soul perceiving it, the Sages or Rishis used to show it by throwing a lump of salt into water. It melted, the water became salt, but by perception only its presence could not be detected. Another illustration was used to explain how

the Highest Self could fill our inner self: "The jar is broken and the Ether that was in it is one with the undivided Ether from which the jar once seemed to sever it."

The Vedanta from the third aphorism to the twenty-eighth, explains Brahm as the universal or underlying Essence, inexpressible, immeasurable, incomprehensible, transcending all attributes, all conceptions of speech or mind, an absolute Unity, the Divine Essence. This mysterious, all pervading spiritual force and presence was wholly unbound by limitations of personality and individuality. This is Brahm in its transcendency.

In order, however, to bring Brahm within the focus of the human mind, the Vedantists distinguished between the qualified Brahm (Saguna) and the unqualified Brahm (Aguna). The former is for worship, is the "phenomenal and the unconditioned Iswara," but as such is only an illusion, really only a conception of the human mind. On the other hand, the "unqualified" or "absolute" Brahm is inconceivable and ineffable, inexpressible, sublimely

transcendent above all praise and above all predicates, beyond all which lies in or is conceived of this visible world.

Since Brahm is conceived as being the All in All, it follows that nothing really exists but this one universal spirit. Everything, therefore, proceeds from it, lives in it, and to it again returns. Whatever appears to exist independently of this one Being is said to be caused by Maya (illusion).

In these lofty speculations it would be foolish to be dogmatic, as the intellect has only probabilities to deal with. Still Shankara seems to have gone to the extremes in his statement and missed the golden mean where truth is found. Later ages have come nearer the truth by pointing out that, although in one aspect of its nature Brahm as Transcendent will ever be unknown to humanity in its present Existence, yet Brahm is accessible or manifested in other practical aspects to us.

1. Brahm is manifested or revealed in Nature. We see sublimity and power, beauty and wisdom, innumerable marks of design,

adaptations, and methods displayed everywhere, and the human mind is lost in amazement. Yet this manifestation ought not to lead to Pantheism, for all in Nature is finite, all evidently lies at an infinite distance from Brahm, nor can be identified with Him. The world, we are constrained to acknowledge, is not Brahm in the sense ascribed by Shankara, but can only be acknowledged as His handiwork, created by His wisdom and power, through which some of His glory is revealed. To say that Brahm created matter is a very different thing from saying that Brahm is "Matter" because He is the All. The creation of the world we attribute to a real cause and to an adequate cause.

2. Brahm is also manifested through the soul of man. The soul we must postulate is Brahm's creation just as much as the outer world, and even a nobler work, revealing higher attributes and loftier plans of the Divine, which are seen only in potentialities or faint outlines in Nature around us with its manifold lower life forms. Still, in spite of

the soul's excellencies and wonderful gifts, it too in its earthly manifestation is finite. It cannot, therefore, be identified with Brahm in the way taught by Shankara.

3. Brahm is also manifested in the soul's conscious communion with the source of its being, seen in its spiritual instincts and intuitions. There, in the sanctuary of the inner world, the soul worships the Creator and consecrates itself to His service, to a life of love, devotion, faith, work, sacrifice, hope, and joy. Yet, while this is true, we ought not to exaggerate the soul's importance so as to identify it with Brahm, or look upon the soul itself as Brahm. It is still the offspring of the Highest, but with whom it may be able to enter into an eternal fellowship of love and affection.

Now let us advance to the second statement of Shankara, in which he explains more particularly what he means by Brahm being the "absolute" Unity. This is chiefly with reference to the soul's relation to Brahm. As modern thinkers now maintain, the soul of man can only be looked upon, as stated, as

Brahm's creation, not Brahm Himself. This latter, however, is Shankara's view. Here, again, he goes to extremes, following in the steps of the sages of Upanishads. Three other schools arose combating Shankara's teaching—Ramanūya, Madhva and Vallabha. There are, therefore, among the Vedantists four different views of the soul and its relation to Brahm, each of which has part of the truth. The error of Shankara, however, in his view of the soul of man, is seen by the far-fetched hypothesis he had to resort to in order to try and bring harmony into his system. Before the reason of man can admit such an astounding assertion that the soul is actually Brahm or God Almighty, it requires to have satisfactorily explained how, in that case, man is weak, frail, transitory, and depending upon others, and above all upon Nature as well as also upon unseen powers. Shankara, in order to get over this and similar serious difficulties, resorted to another far-fetched hypothesis, equally astounding and unsatisfactory. He postulated, namely, that everything in the

Cosmos, including the soul of man, yea, even including Brahm, all were subject to "Maya," Illusion or Dream, or Nescience ("Avidya"), Ignorance.

This explanation is ingenious, but the very opposite seems more like the truth, namely, that we must reverse the hypothesis and consider that a Philosophy of Existence can only succeed by basing itself on the stern Reality of actual facts, not on an "illusory" Existence. Again, for Brahm to subject Himself to illusion of the Reality of things is a most unlikely and God-dishonouring supposition, more especially considering that Brahm is represented as perfect Wisdom, and therefore must be free from all illusion and ignorance. It is as unlikely also that Brahm should willingly deceive humanity or allow souls to deceive themselves for any reason whatever, considering that Brahm is characterised as "perfect Truth," in whom dwelleth no deceit or trickery. From either of these points of view, therefore, Shankara's hypothesis falls to the ground as being inadmissible. Besides, they raise many more

serious difficulties than they remove. But if "Maya" is dismissed as an unfounded assumption, the correlated idea of Samsara and other tenets or speculations must also be abandoned. Although the world of Maya cannot stand for "illusion," it may more truly stand for "phenomenal existence."

After listening to Shankara, let us turn to the other great philosopher of the Vedanta school. Ramanūya is much less extreme and therefore nearer the truth. In order to explain the mystery of God and Existence, he corrected Shankara's fundamental assertion of Brahm, as being one without a second, by pointing out that while it was quite true that there was no Duality, but only a Unity or Brahm, and that we must suffer nothing to usurp or share His or its sovereignty, yet, in this Supreme, Absolute Being, who is exalted far above all finite comprehension to grasp fully, we see revealed a "Unity in diversity," a "Unity" not void of qualities, but perfect in all His Divine attributes, not the glory of an impersonal life, but the glory of a Divine life in

its fulness and beauty, a life of transcending wisdom, infinite power, and Divine immeasurable love. Brahm may therefore be summed up as Transcendent Ideality, Immeasurable Immanence, Infinite Perfect Personality.

Ramanūya thus comes much nearer the truth as now seen by the modern mind. We may sum up his teaching as follows :—

Brahm is a Unity, yet, with a difference, the highest Reality without any illusions whatever. Brahm must be conceived as Lord, Ruler, and Creator of the world. Hence Iswara, or the phenomenal Brahm in Sankhya's system, disappears. Brahm is both the efficient and the material cause of all that exists. He contains in Himself the elements of that plurality which Shankara wrongly regards as illusion. Brahm is also a personal God, full of love and compassion. Brahm in His transcendency is pure Being—both pure intelligence and pure compassion. Matter and form may be looked upon as modes of Brahm's working. In the diversity of the world about us, Brahm is truly manifested. It is no illusion. As for

souls, these are individuals possessing Reality, and are under no illusion or Maya.

Individual souls retain their individuality even when they have reached the blissful abode of Brahm, and thus are not subjected to "absorption." Souls are not identical with Brahm. Souls suffer from unbelief and stupidity, but not from illusions. The love of Brahm or belief in the love of God towards us is the means of salvation or union with Brahm. It is not by knowledge, therefore, that union comes, as taught by Shankara and others, but by *Bhakti* (devotion). The world is not a place of woe. It is an evolution (*Parinama*) with all that this involves.

Lastly, Brahm as the Creator, may for convenience be named *Iswara*, or *Vishni*, but is not thereby a separate God. In His immanent aspect, He is the Soul of the world. As such He is also the Personal God through whose mercy, pity, and love the soul is granted eternal salvation, not therefore by work, but by faith, and whereby the door of communion with Brahm is for ever assured, and

in whose communion it will enjoy perennial bliss.

From this outline you will see the superiority of Ramanūya's system, both as to what is actually taught and what is implied, compared to Shankara's system. Ramanūya asserted a threefold Existence—first the Supreme Being, secondly Soul or Souls, and thirdly Non-Souls or the visible world (*Drisyam*). All three have an eternal Existence ever distinct from each other, yet at the dissolution of all things they would be reabsorbed into the Supreme Spirit, but without thereby losing their own separate identity. Hence he admitted in his system a triad of principles—Unity, Duality, and Plurality, or a Unity qualified, hence also his system is called “*Vishishtadvaitam*,” or Monism with modifications.

The third school which arose under Madhva quite agreed with the others about the Unity of Brahm, who is Nirguna Brahma the Impersonal One, transcending all the attributes known to man. Yet to Madhva there were

two eternal and separate principles, the Soul of God and the soul of man, co-eternal, but not co-equal. From this foundation we saw that Shankara was led to the crowning assumption of the final identity of the individual soul and the Highest Soul, as also the final identity of the world with Brahm. All is one. It is here that Dualism steps in and clears up the confusion of thought in which Shankara had brought himself. Now to adopt Madhva's theory would be to employ the two words—“*Relations*” and “*Degrees*.” Both are bound up with Duality. Madhva would say that Shankara started his Absolute Monism with an improper assumption, and conducted his reasoning in a fallacious manner based upon an imaginary system of things which did not exist in Reality.

The fundamental fallacy lies in overlooking the primitive Dualism of subject and object. It has been pointed out that this is shown by the relation which exists between the two. This is once for all the law of thought as well as the form which every thought must take.

In every act of thought there is this unity in difference. Dualism, therefore, can never be dispensed with in Philosophy, for if we try to identify subject and object, we, by doing so, annihilate both in our thinking. These are the laws of limitation under which we think and upon which the world is framed. The true way to solve the difficulty is, therefore, to see a Unity who is the Supreme Substance, but a Unity in a Trinity of aspects, for this Substance has created two dependent Substances, hence the real existence of the world and the Soul are related to the one great whole. We are forced by the law of our Being to posit a Dualism, or the relation of subject *and* object. A true and complete system of philosophy must be in harmony with all the complex facts of man's intellectual, moral, and spiritual experiences and conceptions. If it is not this, it must be rejected, and for this reason Shankara's system fails in establishing its claim. The Divine Personality is one and the Human Personality is another, and the one cannot

be absorbed in the other, so as to lose its separate personality. Here again the laws of thought prevent it.

A Unity of Affinity may spring, however, from this Duality. We see this for instance in a spiritual aspect of character. For the glory of man is to be one with Brahm in His character, one in thoughts, will, and desires. Therefore, while we cannot conceive our losing our consciousness in God, we may well lose our self-will in the Divine Will. There can be no worshippers when our souls are the same as that which should be the object of our worship.

Now Monotheism is the obvious inference from the Unity of the Universe. It is clearly one system, and therefore only one mind to regulate it. All is as one kingdom under the same set of laws, under one king, and under one constitution. Shankara's assumption of "Illusion" or "Maya" to explain Existence really serves to alleviate nothing; it solves nothing, it illuminates nothing. To maintain the eternal *identity* of the human and the

Divine is very different from arrogating Divinity for Humanity.

The true Union of the Soul with God means that by this humanity comes to participate in God's nature. It attains to a fuller life, more personal and more intense. Such a Union is the highest life conceivable, entrancing and ennobling. It is a Union which means the reciprocal embrace of conscious love, realised and enjoyed. By this means life is consummated in a higher and richer fruition of Existence. Life's true mission is seen to reach the noble, moral ideal of being a blessing to others and pleasing to God. Hence our human existence is elevated by realising the presence of the Divine in all His wonderful, engaging beauty of character in our nature. In potentiality this gives an ideal glory and beauty in man, even while on earth. It gives even more, for it gives an essential affinity with God, although not identity in the sense claimed by Shankara. The latter tried to reach Union with God by abstract thought; as others by

Asceticism, by self-mortification, and by the final loss of God's highest gift—"Personality."

In the world we see in the process or evolution that Brahm has slowly, but increasingly, manifested His will, mind, and character in humanity, reaching its highest point and fullest expression in the soul which has dedicated itself to Brahm, for by *this* Union of love the circle of Being is made complete, and Brahm made All in All, not by absorption, but by love's ever conscious oneness with another. The subjective and objective Existence becomes joined in an everlasting bond of Union, based upon immortal Love.

As regards the "Degrees" referred to, as has been said, "Brahm is not seen in the Cosmos alike in all things, for there are "degrees" in His manifestations. Dimly His perfect attributes and plans are seen on the lower planes of Nature; a fuller, Diviner manifestation is seen in human thoughts, aspirations, and love. Even this richer and fuller manifestation may be very limited as

compared to what may be seen in the realms of Higher Beings presently beyond our ken, who are able to manifest more of God's glory in His Love, Beauty, and other perfections than we can have any conception of on this earth."

As for Vallabha's system we need not say much. He taught that the soul (Iiva) is a metamorphosis of Brahm. The human soul, though separated from the Divine essence, is in other respects of the same nature. It may be compared to a minute drop of vapour radiated in loveliest colours by the sun's rays, as it floats for a little and makes up, in however an insignificant manner, the rainbow which spans the sky. The little drop, as well as the mighty rainbow of which it forms a part, are both evolved by the sun, beautified by the sun, and by the sun afterwards metamorphosed into new forms. In short, both owe to it everything in their varied metamorphoses, which never cease. Whether changed from vapour to a drop of water, or snow, or ice,

or to further uses in Nature's laboratory, all its metamorphoses are due to the mighty Sun in which they live, move, and have their being. In other words, everything is the continual transformation or metamorphoses by Brahm and for Brahm.

Besides taking this view of the soul, Vallabha taught that the body, which is the abode of this bright reflection of Divinity, should be honoured and revered, and not subjected to Asceticism or self-mortifications as a mode of commending man to God, for Brahm must be worshipped by sanctifying all human pleasures to His service. This was called Pushtimarga or "the way of pleasure." According to him, human love in all its forms is sacred and a type of the Divine love. There is a great deal of truth in thus presenting the human body as the temple or dwelling-place of Brahm. Unfortunately, in a corrupt age this doctrine was quickly seized upon as giving liberty to all kinds of excesses and licentious practices, which have made the sect notorious for lax living and of being

Epicureans of a depraved kind, until the celebrated reformer, Svami Narayan, arose last century, who made chastity and purity of life the keynote of all his teaching.

Let us try now to find out some of the truths of which the germs are found in the four Vedanta systems.

They all postulate that Brahm exists, an eternal self-existent Spirit Substance, who, in His Transcendency, is the All in All, one only without a Second. Another postulate is that Brahm's nature is perfect, unbegotten life with Divine Wisdom and Infinite Power, whose existence is Pure Bliss. It should be impossible, therefore, for such an exalted Being to act contrary to His own glorious Perfections, and yet we find a world in existence full of pain, sorrow, struggles, and death. Hence, the question arises, why was such a world, imperfect and impermanent, created by a perfect, all powerful, and all wise Being? Now the Vedantists with Kapila and others answered that "desires" were the cause and the motive, but as "desires" pre-

suppose "wants," and Brahm being "perfect," should be above all "wants" and therefore above all "desires" of whatever nature, the conjecture seems wrong except on one supposition or upon one assumption. This is to postulate that besides the other perfections of Brahm's nature, there is one which sums up and regulates all the others, and this is that Brahm's character is "infinite Love." Now, true love cannot rest content to live a life of self-contemplation or self-communion only. Love requires an object upon which to bestow its wealth of infinite tenderness and affections, for whom to make sacrifices, with whom to have a Divine, conscious, delightful communion and fellowship. This is the highest bliss, life in its highest form, where life and love blend and become one. Upon this assumption some light is thrown on the mysteries of Existence, for now creation of the world is seen to be the result of Divine love seeking object and expression.

Therefore, by love and love's sacrifices the foundation may be conceived to be laid of an

“objective existence.” Brahm is its Creator, its Architect, its Upholder, its Beautifier, its Sustainer, its Preserver, and its End; and yet, while in one sense Brahm is still the All in All, in another, by His infinite love which He has bestowed upon human souls who represent objective existence in its highest aspect, He has given them along with the gift of freedom of will and of responsibility also the gift of an eternal “personality,” with capacities to understand, to admire, to love, and to have Divine fellowship with Brahm for evermore. It is towards this glorious end that creation, represented by humanity as its spokesman, is striving, so that objective existence may at length acquire the beauty and perfection for which it was planned, not as unconscious nature merely, but in its highest aspect alive with self-consciousness and God-consciousness, freely to co-operate and love Him for what He is in Himself. Here we reach at last Love reciprocated, Love glorified. Humanity will be seen as one with God in His nature, in His character, in His beautiful and

benevolent plans, to establish a greater harmony through a life sublime and eternally progressive — a bliss inconceivable and unutterable.

The highest life, however, is built up gradually from the lower elements, and the soul must likewise go through the same process to acquire the graces and excellencies which will fit it for its highest state in Eternity, and which can only be acquired by conflict and trials. True life also is not a passive, but a "dynamic," force in all its transformations, which means in other words, that struggle is one of the conditions for the progress of life. This evolution or process is seen everywhere, whether in the material, the mental, the moral, or the spiritual universe.

You cannot, therefore, dream yourself into a beautiful character. It is by "struggles," by overcoming trials, difficulties, temptations, by consecration to the Highest, that the soul is prepared for its high destiny and glorious perfection; above all, it is by responding to

Brahm's love, and by expressing through it Brahm's love to others, that Heaven's peace, joy, and love fill the soul even in the furnace of life's afflictions, while other souls are also beautified and exalted by their ministrations. We may, therefore, look upon life's trials, ills, and bereavements as means towards an end for the soul's highest good.

A new and cheering light is also thrown upon life's mysteries and upon Brahm's self-sacrificing nature, when it is seen that He has not left "objective Existence" to shift for itself, with the outfit with which it was supplied by Him, but has become its immanent presence, thus sharing in a sense the struggles and victories of the Cosmos, especially dwelling in the soul of man, not as a usurper, but as a co-worker to help the soul to attain the gifts and graces which will beautify and ennoble it for its lofty destiny. Thus it is not simply as an influence or as an immanent force, but He is revealed to the soul in a higher and more enduring aspect, namely, as a supra-

personal Spiritual Being come to dwell in the heart. Hence, as a result, Brahm's love draws forth the soul's affections and seals its dedication with the bliss of an eternal Union of Souls.

Epics

THE MAHABHARATA, GITA, AND RAMAYANA

OUR philosophical review would be incomplete without referring to the above celebrated Epics, more especially the Bhagavat Gita, or the Song of the Adorable, *i.e.* Krishna, embedded in the vast literature of the Mahabharata. This latter work had been known for many centuries, and its stirring stories and adventures had been recited by travelling bards all over India, being in great favour with high and low. The work is said to be the longest national Epic ever written, consisting as it does of some 220,000 lines in eighteen parvans or sections, and is not so much a great Epic as a vast collection of Hindu legendary history, ethics, laws, cosmo-

gony, with a vast mass of religious, moral, and political precepts, arranged in its present form about three centuries A.D. There is a supplementary work, called the *Harivamṣa*, which refers solely to the birth of Krishna and his early life.

The Epic refers primarily to the great warrior dynasties that had been traced in their origins to the sun-god and the moon-god. The word "Mahabharata" means "the great battle of the descendants of Bharata," who was the most renowned monarch of the Lunar dynasty, and who belonged to the royal race of the Kurus. The story is supposed to be recited by Vaisampayana to Janamejaya, the great grandson of Arjuna (the hero of the Gita). The chief object of the Epic is to describe the eighteen days' fight between the leaders of the Kurus and the chief of the Pandavas. After a fierce war the latter is described as having triumphed with the assistance of Krishna. The account of it extends over five sections (from sixth to tenth); the next section describes the obsequies

of the dead. In the following two sections, Bhima, the leader of the Kurus, on his death-bed instructs Yudhishtira on the duties of kings and other topics, all in elevated language. In the sixteenth section is narrated the death of Balarama, and also Krishna, who is shot dead by a hunter. Their return to heaven is described.

The last section narrates the ascent and admission to heaven of the five Pandavas and their kindred. The Epic closes with the reflection that earthly successes, even the possession of a kingdom, are not sufficient for the aspiring soul, but that true rest and satisfaction can only be found by those who aim at union with the Supreme.

Along with the main narrative there are, as said, a great many religious and moral precepts finely expressed. Every shade of thought has found expression in this compilation formed by gradual accretion through many centuries. Space permits me only to present a few specimens. Thus in Mahabharata XIII., No. 5571, you will find that

the "golden rule" was known and highly commended in these early times, written probably long before the Christian Era:—

This is the sum of all true righteousness :
Treat others, as thou wouldst thyself be treated.
Do nothing to thy neighbour which hereafter
Thou wouldst not have thy neighbour do to thee.
In causing pleasure, or in giving pain,
In doing good, or injury to others,
In granting, or refusing a request,
A man obtains a proper rule of acting
By looking on his neighbour as himself.

Mahabharata, XIII. 5571.

Do naught to others which if done to thee
Would cause thee pain ; this is the sum of duty.
Mahabharata, V. 1517.

Piety is recommended in the following lines:—

If thou art wise, seek ease and happiness
In deeds of virtue and of usefulness ;
And ever act in such a way by day
That in the night thy sleep may tranquil be,
And so comport thyself when thou art young,
That when thou art grown old, thine age may pass
In calm serenity. So ply thy task
Throughout thy life, that when thy days are ended,
Thou mayst enjoy eternal bliss hereafter.

Mahabharata, V. 1248.

Death.

✓ Do good to-day, time passes, Death is near,
Death falls upon a man all unawares,
Like a ferocious wolf upon a sheep.
Death comes when his approach is least expected.
Death sometimes seizes ere the work of life
Is finished, or its purposes accomplished.
Death carries off the weak and strong alike,
The brave and timorous, the wise and foolish,
And those whose objects are not yet achieved.
Therefore delay not ; Death may come to-day.
(Death will not wait to know if thou art ready,
Or if thy work be done.) Be active now,
While thou art young, and time is still thy own.
This very day perform to-morrow's work,
This very morning do thy evening's task.
When duty is discharged, then if thou live,
Honour and happiness will be thy lot,
And if thou die, supreme beatitude.

Mahabharata, XII. 6534.

The Mahabharata favours the worship of Vishni. It claims to be "Smriti." It expounds the whole duty of man and was composed for the instruction of the Hindus, but more especially for the guidance of the military caste (Kshatriyas). To the latter the Mahabharata became a sacred code of religious, civil, and military duties, wherein

they also learned of the heroic deeds and princely virtues of their renowned ancestors, who were believed to have descended from the Gods. This Epic was therefore recited and studied earnestly during very many centuries. At great public festivals, also at the Courts of kings and princes, there were men of a special caste, the Sutas or Bards, who recited these ancient battles in order to stir up the listeners to imitate the glorious examples of their forefathers. To all these, "the old paths were the only safe paths," hence King Yudhishtira says in the Epic: "We follow the path which has been trodden by our ancestors in succession." This attachment to what is old and venerable is still a leading idea among most Hindus, both high and low.

BHAGAVAT GITA

Let us now turn our attention to the Gita, which represents to many the loftiest flight of Hindu morality, philosophy, and religion. In beauty of style and nobility of sentiment it is said to be unsurpassed in Indian literature.

The gifted author of this so-called "Lay of the Adorable One," whose name is unknown, was evidently a devout Brahman who belonged to the sect of Vaishnava, and who lived in the South of India. We find that he strove by exalting the caste duties as binding on each and all, to continue to keep under priestly control all the various classes which made up Hindu society, even including the heretics who had adopted the creed of Buddha.

The time of composition of this celebrated work is uncertain, but it appears to have been during the transition period when Buddhism was on the wane, and the Brahmans made a strong attempt to recover the lost ground which their rival had held in India for several centuries. One of these attempts to complete the overthrow of Buddhism appears to be before us in the work under review. It has become one of the most celebrated of the religious and philosophical writings which have come down to posterity from India. In the eyes of the author of the Gita the times

were out of joint, and with admirable tact and ability he tried to set them right.

The first task which the author took in hand was to try and remove the apathy and unwillingness to carry arms and engage in warfare, which the gentle and peaceful Buddha, with his horror of taking human life, indeed any life, had inculcated amongst high and low and his disciples for centuries after him. Now, Buddha himself belonged to the warrior caste, and his peaceful doctrine when he began to preach it with fervour and eloquence had great influence not only among the lower classes, but also in course of time among the noble caste from which he descended. As Buddha had become an Ascetic, so large numbers of the warrior caste followed his example, as in this way they were released from all caste duties as warriors. Thus they avoided hurting or destroying life from any cause whatever. Even among those who continued to devote themselves to the active duties of their calling as warriors, the feeling had gained ground that although there might be some justifica-

tion in fighting against the enemies of one's own country, yet to fight against one's own kith and kin was a grievous sin.

It was therefore in order to try and rally the warrior spirit of courage, of blind obedience and devotion, which had fallen so low, that the Epic first raises its voice.

So as to make his work more realistic and acceptable, the author places his fictitious story at the time mentioned in the Mahabharata, when the deadly feuds occurred between the two families of Pandavas and Kuras, near related. The episode chosen describes the battle where the noble Prince Arjuna, who belonged to the royal race of Pandavas, had marshalled his troops on the plains of Kurukshetra, for the decisive and deadly combat between the contending hosts. The armies were drawn up in battle array, the war conch was about to sound, when Arjuna paused before giving the signal for attack. As he looked over the battlefield he saw in the opposite camp his relatives, young and old, gathered together. By this sight his tender heart was

overwhelmed with grief at the thought of imbruing his hands in the blood of those who, while opponents, were yet part of the family circle. His bow drops from his hand, he weeps, he cannot fight, and exclaims to his trusted charioteer: "My heart is weighed down with faintness, my mind is confused as to duty, we ought not to kill our relatives; for although these overpowered by greed see no guilt in the destruction of a family, and no crime in hostility to friends, why should not we learn to turn away from such a sin, who see the evil in the destruction of kinsmen? Alas, we are engaged in committing a great sin, we who are endeavouring to kill our kindred, arising from their greed of gaining a kingship. If the sons of Dhritarashtra, with weapon in hand, should slay me, unresisting, unarmed, in the battle that would for me be the best; I will not fight." Having thus spoken, Arjuna sank down on the seat of the chariot, his mind overborne by grief.

Thus ends the first part, entitled "The Despondency of Arjuna."

The second discourse introduces the author's answer which he puts in the mouth of the charioteer to whom Arjuna had been speaking. It was Arjuna's noble brother-in-law, Krishna, whose strong hands had held the reins of the prancing horses, and who was his trusted adviser and friend. Yet, behold, the Krishna who replies to the despairing words of Arjuna does so as the spokesman of Vishni, the adorable and divine God, who had overshadowed and incarnated Himself in Krishna for this purpose. Henceforth he is Shri-Krishna or the blessed Lord, and as such addressed in the poem. This God incarnate had no favour, however, for the mild doctrines taught by the heretic Buddha. On the contrary, the stern doctrine of the manifested God now speaking was the "lawfulness of war." It was the first duty of the warrior caste to recognise this, as well as the divine institution of the caste system. One's caste duties must be raised above all other obligations, including those of friendship, attachment, or even kindred.

The warriors must therefore remain at their post of danger and fight when required, without the least thought about consequences, and without the slightest question as to the propriety of slaying in battle even one's own friends or relatives when the country's honour or safety is at stake.

A soldier must not argue, nor pick and choose with whom to fight. He must simply obey orders and never dread death, for in any case the body will soon be in the grave, but the soul is immortal: "As a man casting off worn-out garments put on others new, so casts the embodied soul its worn-out frame to enter other forms. Death is certain for the born, and birth is certain for the dead, therefore, over the inevitable thou shouldst not grieve. As for the soul it is unborn, perpetual, eternal; it is not slain when the body is killed. To a true warrior nothing is more welcome than a righteous war; it offers unsought an open door to heaven. If slain, thou wilt obtain the home of the blest, and if spared and victorious thou wilt enjoy the earth. Therefore

stand up, O son of Kunti! resolute to fight. Gird thee for battle, thus thou shalt not incur sin."

With such words, the divine Spirit through Krishna urged Arjuna to perform the task which had been laid upon him as a soldier and defender of his families' honour and interest. He further declared that the only road to Moksha, or liberation of the soul from transmigration, was in the performance of one's duty and also out of devotion to the Highest. These stirring words were as a counterblast to Buddha's heresy of "non-resistance," by which teaching the profession of Kshatriyas or warriors had fallen into disfavour; moreover, it had also relaxed the solemn duties of caste, and the consequence was seen in the disintegration of society, partly owing to the vast number of Ascetics or religious beggars who infested the land, who preferred to pass an idle life of meditation and inactivity to the strenuous and self-sacrificing life of a warrior, whose duty it was to defend and fight for his Prince and his country. We

can well understand, therefore, why on this account, if for nothing else, a grateful posterity had the Gita incorporated in the venerable tomes of the Maha-bharat, the warriors guide and text-book, seeing the Gita breathed in so high degree the spirit of patriotism, valour, and a high sense of duty, leaving alone the fact that the Hindus had come to believe that these words were actually spoken by Krishna as a divine incarnation and therefore worthy of the highest honour. Consequently you will find the Gita has been inserted in the 25th chapter of Bhishma-Parvan, commencing at line 830 and ending at line 1532. It still remains, however, quite a separate work in the Maha-bharat.

Some others of Krishna's stirring words to Arjuna on this occasion, are:—

“Not one of all these warriors ranged for strife
Escapeth death, thou shalt alone survive,
Therefore stand up ! win for thyself renown,
Conquer thy foes, enjoy the wealth-filled realm,
By Me they are already overcome.
Be thou the outward cause, left-handed one,
Fight ! thou shalt crush thy rivals in the field.”

Arjuna obeyed the divine call, with the result that the usurpers were completely routed and nearly the whole of the family of Kurus lost their lives on the battlefield.

Before we go further, let me point out to you that the Gita consists of eighteen discourses in 699 verses.

It cannot possibly have been the author's meaning that these eighteen dialogues should be understood as if they had been carried on during the critical moment when both armies were waiting with impatience for the order of attack. It would be unworthy of the author's artistic sense of fitness. We must, therefore, assume that the author's idea was that the fight for supremacy of the two rival families for the Kingdom of Hastinapura, was spread over several days, as is indeed described in the eighteen parvanas or sections of the Mahabharat with their eighteen days' fighting, which division we see that the author has closely followed in his poem. In other words, we must imagine that, after the close of each day's battle, one of the discussions took place between Krishna

and Arjuna until the fight was over at the close of the eighteenth day. Let this be, however, as it may. We shall now in the short space at my disposal resume our consideration of the contents of the Gita. We may conveniently divide it in three parts.

In the *first* part we saw the author as a zealous Brahman and patriot, stirring up his contemporaries to do their duties in the world according to the caste into which they were born. These four castes were of divine origin, and could therefore never be abrogated, whatever Buddha might have taught to the contrary.

In the *second* part we see the author as the founder of a new school of philosophy, namely, the Eclectic, by means of which he tried to unify existent systems, whereby he would also be better able to overthrow Buddha's philosophical creed which had found no favour with the Brahman priesthood.

In the *third* part, and which is the most important, we see the author as the expounder of a higher faith than Buddhism, based chiefly

upon Bhakti, *i.e.* personal devotion and love to Krishna as the incarnation upon earth of Vishni, the second God of the Trinity. As such He was declared to be the world's Redeemer, offering salvation free to all, to whatever caste, sect, or faith they might belong, whereas Buddha taught that every one had to work out his own salvation by the accumulation of good works.

Even at the distant age when the author of the Gita wrote, the six schools of Philosophy or Darsanas were all well known in India, among which the Sankhya, the Yoga, and the Vedanta claimed the highest veneration. The author of the Gita found, however, that although all these had some excellencies, each one had also some defects. It was, therefore, as we saw, partly in order to reconcile the conflicting views of these different systems that the author of the Gita constructed an Eclectic system drawn from these different sources.

Thus, as regards the Yoga system, while he highly approved of the self-control and self-

discipline by which the Yoga devotees tried to reach a higher life, and enlarged upon it in the Gita, yet he disapproved of the gross excesses to which their injudicious zeal had brought a great multitude. The fact of any one being a Yoga was no reason why he should withdraw himself from the world and from the caste rules, and thereby try to escape the responsible duties to which he was called as a householder and as a citizen. Such people with ill-balanced natures or badly informed minds always run to extremes, just as we saw the Buddhists had done.

Let me give a few lines of the Gita bearing upon this: "A Yoga by action is verily better than one who renounces the active life. Some people declare that the active life should be relinquished as an evil, but perform thou thy duties, for action is superior to inaction. If I mingled not ever in action unwearied these worlds would fall into ruin."

The author of the Gita comes very near the conception which Aristotle formed of God, namely, that He was a Being whose essence in

mercy and goodness is manifested in eternal energy, the final result of this energy being the happiness of His creatures, in which by sympathy He participates for ever. Having thus remonstrated with the Yogi ascetics for their attempt to cultivate the contemplative life to the neglect of the active and practical life of every day with its duties and privileges, he shows them that both ought to be practised, and how this could best be done.

This leads me to point out to you that the author of the Gita placed great value on "moderation in all things." Excess spoilt all. Thus you read: "Even here on earth everything is overcome by those whose mind remains balanced. He whose Self is harmonised with the Eternal by the Yoga (union of will) enjoys imperishable bliss. From harmony or moderation wisdom is born. They ascend towards the Highest who are settled in harmony (*i.e.* pursue moderation in everything)."

Hence the author of the Gita concluded that the chief end of man must be to live in harmony with the divine constitution of

things, in order to reach perfection and happiness.

Time does not permit me to show you how the author treated the systems of Sankhya and Vedanta, retaining what he considered the truth, and leaving out what he did not agree with.

He favoured the Vedanta in many ways, because it defined the Cosmos in idealistic terms, say of life, of will, of conscious meaning. In short, all was one scheme, and God the explanation of all.

He also greatly favoured, as we saw, the Yoga system, where self-will is dethroned, and the will of the Highest, which man knows and which he calls his God, rules in its place, for true religion is always a life, and a devoted life to the Highest. This the author sets forth in the threefold path,—the path of action (the Karma Yoga), the path of knowledge (the Inan Yoga), but chiefly the path of devotion (the Bhakti Yoga).

Lastly, the author of the Gita gave his adherence to Sankhya's scientific principles of

the unity of all,—unity of substance, unity of force, and unity of process in the world's evolution. We are constrained to assume the unity and rationality of the whole in order to explain the Cosmos in a satisfactory way.

In studying the Gita, you will find that the author approved of the Yoga idea, that the grand aim of all self-suppression or asceticism was to reach the state which enables a man to extinguish his own individuality, and so be able to see God in everything and man nowhere. Let me point out the fallacy of this reasoning. Instead of annihilating our individuality, man's chief object ought to be to advance it in wisdom and strength, developing body, mind, and soul to their utmost capacities. So shall we best give honour to God for His gift of life to us, and best mould our character on the pattern of the perfect beauty of God. In this way we may be said to become one with God in a moral and spiritual oneness, which leads to fullness of life and perfection of character, elevating, refining, and beautifying our souls, whether in the earthly

trammels of a narrow personality, or when transmuted to a higher existence of greater personal worth and value. We shall not, as taught in the Gita, lose our individuality, our personal, eternal Beinghood. We shall exalt, glorify, and perpetuate it by our labours of love and duty.

In the *third* part, the author of the Gita expounded a religious system which he considered superior to Buddha's, whom the Brahmans criticised as having taught that life is bound up in misery, death a nothingness, and God an abstraction. Quite opposite to such pessimistic and dreary views, the author of the Gita being a Vaishnavist (a worshipper of the merciful God Vishni), looked upon life in a buoyant and optimistic spirit, as being full of glorious possibilities, while death was after all a blessing in disguise, and Brahm in the manifestation of Vishni as the one who loved the human race, who therefore had sympathy for human sufferings, and had also kindness and condescension towards even the lowest form of life, hence the stories which arose of Vishni's

various incarnations in the world on great emergencies. When we come to treat of the monotheistic religion of Beauty, we shall have occasion to incorporate most of this part of the Gita into its teaching as worthy to find a place in the Transformed Hinduism.

In India the deification of great men was a common belief. Thus the supreme God Vishni, in His divine majesty, was believed at an earlier age to have chosen to be incarnated in Prince Rama, a hero of the Northern Dynasty, who descended from the solar race. As the seventh Avatar, his mission was to destroy the demon Ravana, and to become to all times the type of manly virtues, while his wife Sita became, and is to this day, the model of wifely devotion, womanly love, grace, sweetness, and faithfulness, the guardian of his fame and fortune.

The author of the Gita appears to be the first who now boldly proclaimed the advent of another Avatar upon earth, of which the Hindus stood in special need at this critical stage of their history. The chief object, how-

ever, appears to have been thereby to divert the attention of the people from the worship of Buddha and lead them to worship the new Avatar, who in the eye of the author more fully represented the true spirit and temper of the Hindus, especially of Southern India. Hence the author chooses for this purpose the well known and beloved warrior Krishna, whose mighty deeds were recorded in the Maha-bharata, for the overthrow of the giant Kansa, the representative of the principle of evil in the world. In this way Krishna, who descended from the Lunar Dynasty of Southern India, became the eighth Avatar, as Buddha later on, as a concession to his numerous disciples, whom they wished to conciliate and win over to the reformed Hinduism, was by the Brahman priesthood elevated to be the ninth Avatar. One more is still to come, who is to appear at the close of the fourth age of the world, when it has become ripe for destruction and for a new creation. The name of this Avatar will be Kalki, belonging to the family of Vishniyasas, who are Brahmans. In this final

manifestation, wickedness and all evil are to be entirely rooted out of existence.

Seeing the exalted view which the followers of Vishni held of their Supreme Deity, the author of the Gita pictures forth His unsurpassable glory, as incarnated in Krishna, in eloquent terms, especially in the ninth discourse, to which I refer you. Vishni had incarnated Himself in Krishna for the protection of the good, the innocent, and the sufferers, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the restoration of the lost to righteousness. Hence the Hindus think that no better ideal in life exists to follow, and that Krishna's life (as an incarnation of Vishni) is of the deepest moral and social significance.

Before we leave the Gita, let me sum up its teaching:—

1. We saw that the author instilled into his countrymen a high sense of duty and the virtue of patriotism. He also confirmed the caste system and the privileges of the Brahmans.

2. He advocated a strenuous life, with moderation in all things.

3. He unified the existing systems of thought under a higher synthesis, by forming an eclectic school.

4. He placed religion on the basis of optimism, on idealism, and on God's personality, whose sublime character he magnified above all other Hindu writers. He proclaimed a God who satisfied the cravings of the human heart, who sympathised with humanity, and indeed with all life, who, as their Redeemer, was ever near to rescue them out of their difficulties, whether individuals, families, or nations. Above all, it was by love and devotion to the Supreme that the sin-burdened soul would get release from all sin and acquire assimilation with God. Lastly, being free from all earth's troubles, with no fear of still further transmigrations, the soul would obtain eternal bliss and rest or absorption with Brahm.

Let me close by giving you a few more extracts from the Gita as specimens of its lofty teaching. I have taken them from Sir Monier

Williams' translation in metric form, which have been very successfully done, and preserves the spirit of the original :—

“Do everything for Me, the highest Lord,
Fix thy heart upon Me,
Consecrate thy thoughts upon Me,
Work for My sake, resign thyself to Me,
So shall thou verily attain Me.”

“Just as air lives in space and does not affect it, so do all beings reside in Me and don't touch Me.”

“This world is pervaded by Me,
And yet, I am distinct from it.”

“Do thy duty without regard to the results.”

THE RAMAYANA

This third celebrated Epic deserves also a few remarks, and is worthy of your study. It is rather, however, to be classed with the “Kavya,” *i.e.* an Epic by an obscure author (Valmiki), whereas the Gita belongs to the “Itihasas,” which, as we saw, was attributed to a superhuman authorship.

In its earliest form this Epic is understood to have been composed about the fourth century B.C. It consists of about 24,000 stanzas

arranged in seven books. The Rama-candra describes the life and wanderings of the hero Rama, who afterwards became the seventh incarnation of Vishni. He was raised up to destroy the demon Ravana, and also to become upon earth the pattern or ideal of all manly virtues; besides, Rama with his wife Sita are held up as models of conjugal love and fidelity. For more than 2000 years the story of Rama and his consort has been household words all over India. The Epic has had an enormous influence in moulding India's character upon lines of everything admirable and worthy of imitation.

The story is long, and I can only give you the opening lines in which the Rishi Narada in reply to the poet's inquiry as to who was the most perfect and noble man in the world, selects Rama, a scion of the noble family of Ikshivaku of the Solar dynasty, as coming up to the standard, for he was a heroic, noble minded, pious and virtuous man, a model in all his relations of life, as was his wife Sita.

Rama sacrificed personal ease, comfort, health, ambition, and chose a life of exile rather than accept a throne on terms he could not approve of. The poet sums up his character as follows:—

His mind controlled, a chief of might,
In Scriptures versed, in glory bright,
His steps in virtue's paths are bent,
Obedient, pure, and eloquent.
His plighted word he ne'er forgets,
On erring sense a watch he sets.
By nature wise, his teacher's skill
Has trained him to subdue his will.
Good, resolute, pure and strong
He guards mankind from scathe and wrong,
And lends his aid, and never in vain
The cause of justice to maintain.
Patient as earth, but roused to ire
Fierce as the world-destroying fire.
In bounty like the lord of gold,
And justice self in human mould.

As to his outward appearance, the author describes it as follows:—

Tall and broad shouldered, strong of limb,
Fortune has set her mark upon him.
High destiny is clear impressed
On massive jaw and ample chest.
His lordly steps are firm and free.

All fairest graces join to deck
 His head, his brow, his stately neck,
 And limbs in fair proportion set
 The manliest form ever fashioned yet.

The Epic has four periods which correspond to the chief events in the life of the hero :—

(1) His early life, his marriage, and appointment as heir-apparent.

(2) His banishment and exile to the forests.

(3) His war with the giant Ravana and the hosts of evil demons called Rakshasas, for the recovery of Rama's faithful and beautiful wife, Sita. His success and reunion with her.

(4) Rama's return, his restoration to the throne, and final reunion with Sita, and translation to heaven.

No product of Sanskrit literature has enjoyed a greater popularity in India, and the prophecy in the opening stanzas has so far been fulfilled, where it says :—

As long as mountain ranges stand
 And rivers flow upon the earth,
 So long will this Ramayana
 Survive upon the lips of men.

The celebrated mediæval poet in India, Tulsi
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Das (about A.D. 1600), has also composed in Hindi this Epic from various sources, called Ram Charit Manas, which, with its high standard of virtue, nobility, and purity is looked upon as a sacred work by millions of the Hindus in Northern India. Tulsi Das may be said to be the founder of the worship of Rama in Upper India.

Before we leave the Ramayana let me give one or two short extracts:—

Transitoriness of Life.

Wherever we walk, death marches at our side,
Wherever we sit, death seats himself beside us,
However far we journey, death continues
Our fellow-traveller and goes with us home.
Men take delight in each returning dawn,
And with admiring gaze behold the glow
Of sunset. Every season as it comes
Fills them with gladness, yet they never reck
That each recurring season, every day,
Fragment by fragment, bears their life away.
As drifting logs of wood may haply meet
On Ocean's waters, surging to and fro,
And having met, drift once again apart,
So fleeting is a man's association
With wife and children, relatives and wealth,
So surely must a time of parting come.

Satire on Wealth.

✓
He who has wealth has strength of intellect,
He who has wealth has depth of erudition,
He who has wealth has nobleness of birth,
He who has wealth has relatives and friends.
He who has wealth is thought a very hero,
He who has wealth is rich in every virtue.

Pleadings of Sita, the perfect wife and mother.

A wife must share her husband's fate ;
My duty is to follow thee wherever thou goest.
Apart from thee, I would not dwell in heaven itself.
Deserted by her lord, a wife is like a corpse.
Close as thy shadow would I cleave to thee here and
hereafter,
Thou art my king, my guide, my only refuge and
divinity.
It is my fixed resolve to follow thee.
If thou must wander forth through thorny trackless
forests,
I will go before thee treading down the prickly
brambles,
To make smooth thy path.
Walking before thee, I shall feel no weariness.
The forest-thorns will seem like silken robes, ✓
The bed of leaves, a couch of down.
To me the shelter of thy presence
Is better far than stately palaces,
Yea, than paradise itself.
Protected by thy arm, gods, demons, men
Shall have no power to harm me.

With thee I will live contentedly on roots and fruits.
Sweet or not sweet, if given by thy hand
They will to me be like the food of life.
Roaming with thee, in desert wastes,
A thousand years will be a day,
Dwelling with thee, even hell itself would be to me
A heaven of bliss.

To prove to you the strong hold this poem has upon the people of India, there is still every year in the month of October an annual festival called Rama-lila, where, to enormous numbers of deeply interested and even excited audiences, the story of Rama is recited, also acted with dramatic representations of the carrying off of Sita, concluding with the overthrow and death of the monster Ravana. The birthday of Rama is also celebrated on the 9th April. It is called Rama-navami.

Let me close with Rama's noble utterances, where he declines the throne offered to him, and replies to Javalis' sophistical arguments in favour of it:—

There is nothing greater than truth,
Truth should be esteemed the most sacred of all
things.

Having promised obedience to my father's commands,
I will neither through covetousness, nor forgetful-
ness,

Nor through blind ignorance,
Break down the barrier of truth.

Modern Hinduism

BEFORE entering upon the closing period which is represented by modern Hinduism, it is well to take a short review of the causes which have contributed to this development. The first and most important was the rise of Buddhism. In my previous work I devoted some space to explain the system of Buddha. I will now only supplement this by saying, that in this celebrated Hindu Aryan known variously as "Siddharta" (his personal name), "Gautama" (family name), "Sakya" (the name of his clan), hence often called "Sakya Muni," (*i.e.* Sage of the clan Sakya), "Kshatriya" (the name of his warrior caste), "Buddha" (the Enlightened One, when he became an Ascetic), we have well attested one of the most beautiful and Godlike characters in humanity that the world has ever seen. In

this celebrated, but humble reformer, we find a striking illustration of the value of "individualism" in society, as opposed to a slavish "collectivism." Who, about 522 B.C., would have thought as they passed that solitary half-starved mendicant, resting wearily and sadly under the shade of the Boddhi tree in the jungles not far from Benares, that he was the one who, in God's providence, would give the death-blow to and practically overthrow the gigantic ecclesiastical sacrificial structure of Brahmanism reared laboriously by so many generations of the most astute, far seeing, worldly and fanatical Brahmans, who proudly claimed kinship with and control over the Deities, along with an absolute, unquestioning despotism over mankind? Yet, so it was. One single, brave spirit, devoted and truth-loving, effected this stupendous revolution. He has been the means of rescuing millions upon millions during these 2500 years from slavish superstitions, from despair of mind, and from a sacerdotal tyranny, unexampled elsewhere in the world.

The good work of Buddha has not up to now reached its full fruition. Yet, as far as his sublime lessons of love and compassion have penetrated the masses, they have been one of the greatest blessings to humanity, and the end of his influence is not yet. One sees how, in Buddha's case, it is the "individual" who is the "dynamic force" to regenerate humanity. Indeed this is the case always and everywhere. "Individualism," therefore, should be prized and nourished, as against "despotism," whether in Church or State. Out of a single household, even the humblest, may follow influences that shall stimulate the whole world. This is an uplifting thought for all parents, especially for the mothers whose influence over the young is so far-reaching, for one never knows what marvelous capacities are lying dormant within a young life.

The reforms which Buddha attempted to introduce would, to his contemporaries or outsiders in that priestridden country, appear to be a chimera, a sheer impossibility, as they

struck at the root of the arrogant, overgrown, and all-powerful religious system which had reached the zenith of its power, having then for more than a thousand years claimed to be superhuman and Almighty God Himself incarnated in human forms in the Priesthood. Buddha's teaching, however, condemned this system of magical sacerdotalism. He also swept away the millions of Deities they worshipped, with their animal sacrifices and drink-offerings. He disapproved of the imposition on the credulous of penances and self-mortifications ordered by the priests, and unblushing extortions of the latter from the worshippers. Above all, Buddha was opposed to the oppressive caste system with its privileges for the priesthood and iron restrictions upon the rest. He condemned the current asceticism where it meant a resort to idleness and useless dreamy speculations. Only where it meant a helping hand to remove the world's sorrows did he approve of it, and upon this foundation he wished to build it.

Finally, Buddha introduced a religion worthy of being common to all mankind, and he did this by awakening in men's hearts the noble ideal of a brotherhood as broad as the human race. His system, therefore, rose not only above caste and rank and colour, but also above all nationality. Thus he made the whole human race bound together in a loving bond of union. Yet it is only in our own times, some 2500 years later, that this sublime truth has been properly grasped and has begun in earnest to influence humanity.

Buddha, however, repudiated all force in spreading his doctrines. Only by calm reasoning, by gentleness, by persuasion, and, above all, by living out in daily life his precepts, could the world be won over. Indeed, Buddha's beautiful life and example are an ever-stimulating power in the world. He showed in himself the grandest picture of love by service and self-denial for the human race to follow, and in this, therefore, is he also one of the world's greatest benefactors.

As a Hindu scholar has well said:—"The annals of the ancient nations of the earth do not disclose anything so lofty in its teaching, so pure in its spirit, so rich in its lessons of charity, forgiveness and love, as the religion of Gautama Buddha." The result was that in the deep moral and spiritual darkness spread over India, a great light had arisen, and all people from far and near were drawn to it, who loved the light more than the darkness.

After the founder's death Buddhism flourished for many centuries, and over a great part of India gained among earnest souls the supremacy over the old faith. Yet, in the end, little by little, superstition reasserted itself and ceremonialism got the upper hand; while Brahmanism defeated, yet ever keen and watchful, succeeded in regaining the lost ground as India's spiritual teachers, by introducing "modern Hinduism," reformed and up to date. This new cult included the Aryans, Buddhists, Janis, and Non-Aryans in one huge community. All

faiths were equally welcome, only subject to Hindu civil laws, Hindu rites, Hindu castes, and Hindu reformed faith; and the price the Brahmans paid for this concession was to include under "Modern Hinduism" every creed and every practice, with freedom in religious worship. One restriction they stipulated for—the so-called divine caste system, of which the Brahmans were the divine rulers. Seeing that society in India could not be conceived as existing except under the universal caste *régime*, each and all of the various and conflicting faiths submitted willingly to this one stipulation as a matter of necessity, which meant little to them in the way of submission, but everything to the Brahmans, in order to maintain their supremacy, and for the orderly working and control of society and of each individual. Such, then, it has remained to our date.

The Brahmans thus gained the day, by working on the old lines by which they had conquered in the past, namely, first, by concessions and compromises, and then by absorption.

In the case of the rival faith, Buddhism, in order to overcome it, the Brahmans incorporated it almost wholesale into "reformed Hinduism." In consequence of this, they were obliged to abolish the animal sacrificial system, which for centuries had been the keystone of their ecclesiastical structure, and a mine of wealth and influence. This was to them a heavy price to pay. But they faced it, and it saved the situation for them. Total abstinence from strong drink and an almost uniform vegetarianism among the Hindus was another price they had to pay. Universal tolerance towards other religious faiths, kindness to all living creatures, the sacredness of all life, and a society recognised by its gentle, peaceful manners, these were all the outstanding Buddhist graces, which were now also incorporated into the reformed or modern Hinduism.

They had even further to accommodate the rival faith in order to gain it over completely. Instead of the old dreary worship of the Brahmans founded upon fear and dread of the

Gods, they now also imitated the Buddhists in modifying their ancient worship on popular lines connected with joyful and glad fellowship, processions, music and liberality to the poor. Pilgrimages also became popular to visit the shrines of the Saints, as the Buddhists had got an image in their temples of their reformer who had now come to be looked upon as God incarnate upon earth. His mild and placid face they looked upon with affection, and worshipped before it with reverence and gratitude.

Thus Buddhism was practically absorbed by Brahmanism by the twelfth century A.D., and the reconciliation between the two rival faiths was at last thoroughly completed by the Brahmans elevating the despised reformer Gautama, to be the ninth Avatar or incarnation in human form of Brahm or Vishni, in which estimation He is still held by the Hindus, Buddha being looked upon as one of Vishni's ten Avatars, or descents upon the earth for the good of mankind.

The second cause which helped to extend

and consolidate the "Modern Hinduism" was the rise of the new religion by Mahommed. In the beginning of the eleventh century A.D., the celebrated conqueror Mahommed of Ghazni invaded India in twelve expeditions, in the following century followed by another conqueror Mahommed Ghorî, under whom the faith of Islam got a permanent hold of the northern part of India. This was afterwards extended all over India except in southern India, south of the Krishna River. Independent Mahomedan kingdoms now arose over a large part of India. Their rulers were fierce, barbarous, and fanatical. Under their sway the Hindus had to submit, either by conversion or by paying heavy taxes under pain of death.

Great multitudes of the Hindus went over to the faith of Islam under compulsion. This alarmed the Brahmans. They saw that their chance had come both from patriotic and religious motives to try and unite the various Hindu sects together in presence of the common danger. Their efforts were successful,

and the task of evolving modern Hinduism was at last accomplished. In a sense all the warring factions were united into one powerful organisation. While, however, the admission of Buddhism into Brahmanism was a decided gain to the latter, the admission of the Non-Aryan faiths was a decided retrograde movement from a true religious point of view, for it was a lapse into idolatry, a belief and worship of Divine incarnations upon earth, combined with an unrestrained polytheism.

Thus has Brahmanism maintained its supremacy in India to our days by its subtle compromising spirit, its universal toleration and receptivity. It has assimilated and digested from every quarter, and accommodated itself to all circumstances in order to maintain its supremacy as India's spiritual leader. It is all-comprehensive, all-absorbing, all-compliant, all-tolerant.

Under this new *régime* all creeds were made welcome, all religious practices tolerated; all worships, whether Nature, Fetish, Symbolic or Spiritual, were permitted; all speculations,

whether Pantheistic, Polytheistic, Monistic, Theistic, &c., had free play; full liberty in creed, worship, and speculations was allowed; only one condition had to be subscribed to, namely, that all members of the "Modern Hinduism" should conform to the caste rules and acknowledge the spiritual supremacy of the Brahmans.

Thus it comes about that to the modern Brahman creed, worship, and speculations are of little account in the way of affecting the membership of the faith, while conduct in daily life as interpreted by the caste system and its rules is everything. So long, therefore, as the Brahmans have the control of the conscience of the Hindus as revealed in outward life and conduct, so long the Brahmans are content, for by this lever they keep their high position. The caste system is their chief anchor, without which their present supreme rule would come to an end. A new social system on the basis of universal brotherhood and co-operation must first arise, when the natives are more ripe for it, by education

and training, a system based more on enlightened, democratic individualism as in the modern world, and less on the narrow exclusive collective lines as heretofore.

With regard to the religious system of the Hindus as understood by "Modern Hinduism," their sacred literature is no longer the "Vedas" and the additions to it, at least from a popular point of view. This is because the modern Hinduism is practically based upon Non-Aryan sources, which were incorporated in the Aryan faith. Among these stand out prominently the Puranas (ancient legendary histories and tradition), or the fifth Veda (claimed now to be equal in sanctity to the old Vedas), especially the Vishni Purana. These writings consist of eighteen volumes called Mukhya, or great Puranas, which are reported to comprise about 400,000 couplets. They are in three divisions; the first relates to Brahma, the second to Vishni, the third glorifies Siva.

Besides these there are eighteen other volumes called "Upa," or lesser Puranas. This litera-

ture is of comparatively little value, and is the slow growth in South India during some ten centuries from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries A.D. The works consist of five subjects, comprising legends about their ancient kings, some of whom they describe as having descended from the Solar, others from the Lunar dynasties. Then there are long accounts of their gods and goddesses and the worship due to them; with attempts at Cosmology, Theology, &c., also descriptions of the creation and destruction of the world, likewise how to attain superhuman power and control over the Divinities. Arising out of their conceptions of Brahm as revealed by incarnations mostly in human forms, they recognise Vishni and Siva as two chief manifestations of Brahm. This has, therefore, become the leading cult in India in modern life. The worship of either of these two manifestations or incarnations of Brahm may therefore be said to be the popular faith in modern life.

Another literature of a still more degrading

type has been incorporated in the modern Hinduism, and this is the religious books called the "Tantras," of which there are sixty-four volumes. These books are mostly manuals of mysticism and magic, written otherwise very much on the same lines as the Puranas. The religion advocated in these books is the exponent of "Saktism," the wife of Siva, under her various manifestations. It is a licentious worship, and leads to cruelty, self-indulgence, and sensual gratification. Hence it is a blot upon the "Modern Hinduism." This sect goes under the name of Bahm Marges, or the secret sect.

As regards the modern worship of the Hindus, it is in one aspect very simple. The way of devotion consists chiefly in going regularly to the temple, saluting the idols, bringing them offerings in food or other things, and all the time, indeed the oftener the better, invoking the name of the tutelar god whom they worship. The oftener the name is repeated, the more chance there is, as they think, that the worshipper will get favours granted

by the gods. They base their calculations on a commercial basis, for they say, as the merchant is obliged to give goods in exchange for the money received, so the gods are obliged by getting so much veneration to repay it in favours to the worshipper. Hence you find Hindus who mechanically repeat without stopping, day by day, and hour by hour, perhaps several thousand times in a day, the name of a certain deity, and confidently look for a sure reward for all their labours. "Rama," being one of the supreme deities and much beloved and honoured, is universally resorted to in this form of worship of "Jap" or "Invocation." Each sect, as a rule, invokes its own Divinity or God, and the priests assure the worshippers that this is accounted to them as works of righteousness, including as it does both "work" and "devotion." Pilgrimages are also in great favour, as well as fairs (Melas), partly for trading and amusements, partly also in order to bathe in some sacred waters or to do homage to some popular local deity. Besides these there are penances, meditations,

and devotional exercises, either direct or by proxies. You will find that in India everything in life has its appropriate rite of worship or purification.

Everything in daily life is therefore regulated by fixed rules of custom called *Acara*, handed down from the past and formulated by the supposed divine authority of the Brahmins. The chief moral ideals which have been in force in India, especially since Buddhism was incorporated in Hinduism, are :—

Reverence to parents, Brahmins, and the teacher.

Liberality to the priests and to divine ordinances.

Non-injury to life, especially to animals.

Detachment of the soul, control of the senses, and renunciation of the world.

We may sum up by saying that the Divine Ideal is conceived by the “learned” class in India as “Supreme Wisdom.”

By the “unlearned” class, as “an indulgent Divine Being who is open to flattery and bribery.”

On the other hand, the Divine Ideal is conceived by the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty as "supreme love with ethical perfections," for God is only knowable to humanity through the ideal of human personality, conceived as perfect, glorious, and soul-satisfying in every respect.

The two great faiths in India, Brahmanism and Mahomedanism, which for centuries mutually hated and despised each other, could not exist together for so many centuries without mutually affecting each other, if only indirectly. As regards the Brahmans it cannot be doubted that the tendency has been to bring Monotheism more to the forefront, in which the Brahmans see that Islam has the advantage. On the other hand, the latter has learned indirectly from Hinduism the practice of worshipping "Saints," as is done in Hindu temples with the Idols, and they have their caste rules quite as strict as the Hindus. In India the practical difference nowadays between the two faiths is that the one is "Parasti," the other "Pir Parasti," *i.e.* the Hindus

have "image" worship, the Mahommedans have "Saint" worship; hence the worship of "Allah" is superseded to a great extent now by the worship and gifts paid to the "Saints." Perhaps in course of time Brahmanism may try to absorb Mahommedanism, as it has opened its doors to all other faiths which threatened its existence.

The sources of worship in "Modern Hinduism" will therefore not be found in the Vedas, but must be studied in the Puranas, which constitute the sacred literature of the bulk of the Hindus of the present day. We have already glanced at these works, which are mostly derived from Non-Aryan sources, and adopted by the Brahmans as the popular bible of the Hindus since the great ecclesiastical amalgamation.

The Puranas teaching with its Epics has brought to the front the worship of three great manifestations of Brahm, say:—

1. The cult of Vishni represents the principle of salvation as a gift—free grace.

2. The cult of Siva represents the principle of human merits—salvation by works.

3. The cult of Sakti represents the principle of commercial bargaining—salvation by purchase.

Vishni is considered the Preserver, the benign God, and the Personal Protector, who out of His great compassion has assumed various incarnations upon earth with the object of overthrowing the demons which are sending plagues and disasters upon the world, in order to make mankind unhappy and at last destroy it. This worship goes under the name of Vaishnavism, and as Vishni is very popular, the bulk of Hindus worship Him in His incarnations. He is looked upon as the author of all good. Hence worship to Him is based upon faith, love, and devotion. His worship perhaps best represents the spirit of the ancient Vedic faith shown towards Agni and Indra. It also goes under the name of Hari. His devotees have as a distinguishing mark a frontal sign of three perpendicular lines called "Tilak." To the worshippers of Vishni He is the blessed Lord and the Lord of All.

The worship of Vishni in His transformations is the highest found in "Modern Hindu-

ism." As has been well said : "It is the only real religion of the modern Hindu, for it alone possesses the essential elements of a genuine religion. For there can be no true religion without personal devotion to a personal God, a God who can satisfy the yearnings of the heart, a religion of faith, love, and prayer, rather than mere head knowledge and self-righteous works. Such a God was believed to be represented by Vishni, the God who evinced His sympathy with mundane sufferings, His interest in human affairs, and His activity for the welfare of all created things by frequent descents upon earth, hence the intense faith in Vishni in His two human incarnations of Rama and Krishna."

Vishni is believed to have His blessed abode in a place called Vaikuntha, where every faithful follower will be transported to after death, and once admitted is not to be borne upon earth again.

Let me also state that all the Hindus gods are represented as being married. Vishni's wife is the beautiful Lakshmi or Sri. She is

to the Hindus the goddess of beauty and of wealth. As her husband Vishni, for the good of mankind, descended upon earth in human form in the persons of Rama and Krishna, so Lakshmi descended also, for the same reason, upon earth in human form in the persons of Sita (Rama's wife) and in Radha (Krishna's wife). These are considered models to all women in India of what a true wife should be to her husband. So much are these Divinities revered, admired, and loved that each of the couples has what we may call two bibles devoted to them. Thus the beautiful devoted lives of Rama and his wife are described in the Valmika Ramayana and in the Ramayana of the celebrated poet Tulsi Das. The mission and work of Krishna and his wife are described in the Bhagavata-Purana, and in the Bhagavad-Gita. The heaven of Krishna is called Goloka; there His worshippers find rest and beatitudes according to their devotion shown to Him when on earth.

Before leaving the Vishni cult as represented by the worship of Krishna and Rama, a few

remarks may be made with reference to the expression "Bhakti." This means faith or supreme devotion, and Ramanūya, the reformer, showed that this grace ought to manifest itself in the following characteristics:—Kalyana (Purity), Satyam (Truthfulness), Arjavam (Rectitude), Daija (Compassion), Danam (Charity), Ahmisa (Inoffensiveness), Anavasada (Cheerfulness).

Bhakti is divided into two portions—Mukhya (supreme devotion) and Vaidhi (ceremonial devotion).

In general it may be said that the leading idea in the Vishni cult is that of devotion and loyalty to a single Supreme and Personal Deity. In order to express this feeling the word Bhakti came in vogue, which meant the clinging affection of the heart to the Supreme, especially to Vishni, the all-pervader, who was thought to be present in all things. Those who put their trust in Him and worship Him aright by the way of Bhakti, He exalts to a place in His own heaven. This beautiful conception, however, is marred by the idea

that Vishni comes in nearness to man only through His Avatars or Incarnations; and that when He appears in bodily shape and for particular purposes, it is not the whole of Him (except perhaps in the case of Krishna) but only some portion of His essence that incorporates itself with the body of a human being or an animal. These descents are mostly made to destroy the enemies of mankind, but the conception has not risen to the idea of the object of the descent being the moral or spiritual good of humanity, the transformation of man to God's spiritual image, an ethical perfection or Salvation.

In connection with the doctrine of Avatar has arisen, as we saw, Bhakti Marga, the way of devotion; Inana Marga, the way of knowledge; and Karma Marga, the way of work.

Among these the Hindus make their choice as to their cult of worship, so as to reach Salvation or Beatitude. For the attainment of this there are generally five stages, the one rising above the other in intensity, and beautifully conceived:—Santi, calm contem-

plation; Dasya, surrender of the will to God; Sakhya, forming friendship with God; Vatsalya, entertaining filial affection towards God; Madhurya, a supreme, all-absorbing love for God.

Bhakti is a beautiful conception, but it has been degraded by connecting it with the worship of a God incarnated in human form, instead of dedicating the devotion only to the Supra-personal Brahm or God who must be worshipped only in Spirit, and not under any human incarnations. In other ways the Bhakti mode of salvation of the soul has been further degraded, for among the common worshippers Bhaktan now generally means simply a faith in everything, whether the faith is in an idol, in ceremonial observances, in ascetic performances, or in religious services. If they have only faith in the object they worship, this serves them for justification, and a blessing will rest upon them. Of course, this makes religion an easy matter, and this is precisely what suits the ignorant, superstitious Hindus.

The word Yoga or Union is nowadays used

in different ways. Thus, he who seeks salvation through Work is called Karma Yoga; he who seeks salvation through Philosophy is called an Inana Yoga; he who seeks salvation through Mysticism is called Raja Yoga; he who seeks salvation through Devotion is called Bhakti Yoga.

Briefly, Hindu Philosophy makes "knowledge" the great instrument of salvation. Modern Hinduism puts "blind faith" in its place. Therefore, the Hindus say:—

"That which you believe, have faith in it, and you will gain your end. Have faith in your idols or in your works of righteousness and all will be well."

There are four grades in the happiness of the Saints in glory with Vishni, finely expressed:—

1. Saloka (to be in the same world with God).
2. Sanupa (to be in the divine presence).
3. Sarupa (to be in the divine image).
4. Sayujya (to be in complete identity with God).

Considering that man is at once a thinking,

feeling, and willing being, we can understand how humanity, by taking one or the other of these as its starting-point, has arrived at different forms of religion. Thus Brahmanism laid stress upon the thinking faculty; Buddhism laid stress on the sentimental side of humanity; whereas the Religion of Beauty includes both these, and adds to these the willing mind, so that the three faculties are mutually complementary to each other.

Although Religion affects the whole man, it may be seen from different points of view. Thus, Religion is chiefly a matter of personal devotion to the pietest, of feeling to the sentimentalist, of daily action to the moralist, of deeds to the man of action, of observances to the ritualist, and of doctrine to the reasoner. In other words, true Religion embraces the faith in God, the love of God, and the obedience to God, shown in the threefold elements of: Doctrine, which is the product of our intellect; Devotion, which is the product of our emotion; Conduct, which is the expression of our will. In the eye of the Religion

of Beauty each aspect has its due place and value, and all three are indispensable.

Of all the many religious beliefs of the Hindus, the Vishni cult is the most spiritual, being the least wedded to mere forms and ceremonies. In this way, therefore, it approaches most nearly to the conceptions of the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty.

The second manifestation of Brahm is the worship of Siva or Har, also called "Mahadeva," *i.e.* the Great God, or the great Ascetic "Mahatapah." His worshippers are distinguished by a frontal mark of three horizontal lines.

This used to be the "terror-inspiring" God when He was represented as the Destroyer as well as the Reproducer of all things in the primitive Dravidian worship. He still holds the allegiance of South India as the supreme object to be worshipped—not one of love, but one of fear. This is still the prevailing faith, for instance, of all Tamil-speaking Hindus, as also the faith of the formerly fighting races of Rajputs.

Nowadays Siva, as the Supreme, is mostly conceived in His ascetical character. The philosophical idea underlying His worship is that everything in the world only exists by the disintegration of something else. This is no doubt true, for Existence in itself we may take to be permanent, but its formal elements are in a constant flux; hence all compounds must be dissolved again and anew re-formed. The error in the conception by the Hindus is that they ascribe the destruction to "demoniacal" forces; hence Siva was manifested when the world was perishing, to overthrow the evil powers and anew recreate all. Thus Siva is the symbol of the eternal reproductive and recreative powers of Nature which is perpetually being reintegrated after each disintegration. In other words, new life can only be got through the death of the old life.

As the male recreating power of Siva is called Maha-deva, so his better half is called Maha-devi, the great goddess. She is known also as the mother goddess or great power of Nature (Sakti). These two are the male

and female generative energies operating unceasingly in the world, vivifying and sustaining all. The Hindus have deified the sexual instincts. For this reason Siva is usually worshipped under the impersonal symbol of the Phallus or Lingam.

There are two aspects nowadays of Siva: as the world's re-creator, and as impersonating the ideal Ascetic in His self-mortification and suppression of His passions. Siva is the only one among the Gods who by His own unaided efforts and austerities coupled with meditations and wisdom was thought to have conquered His lower nature and thereby rose to the highest rank of Godhead, for at first he was only Rudra (the storm God). Siva is therefore the recognised Patron God of all Yogis, and also of most of the Brahmans caste, because Siva's name, as we saw, was linked also with meditations and wisdom along with the conquering spirit, which enabled him to triumph over his lower nature—a glorious example therefore for all his earthly followers. Hence Siva is generally represented as an

Ascetic. Owing to the stern character of Siva, his worshippers believe that He can only be propitiated by works. Therefore his worship is called the path of "hardship." On account of this, the greatest importance is attached to the value of acquiring "merits" during a man's lifetime, in the hope thereby of reaching heaven and escaping rebirth on the earth or elsewhere.

The worshippers of Siva model their life as a rule upon the basis of renunciation of the world, of poverty, and of retirement from active life. Hence an Ascetic generally starts with mendicancy and closes his career with asceticism.

Siva's heaven is called Kailasa, situated in a mountain among the Himalayas. There he dwells with his wife Pārvati (daughter of the mountain). His employment is unceasingly to turn his rosary as is the wont of the Yogis, and as unceasingly to engage in invocation on behalf of his worshippers. So much is Siva honoured that his worshippers have given him one thousand and eight names which describe his different attributes. The

bull (Nandi) is sacred to Siva, being a type of the reproductive energy. The couple have two sons. The one is Skanda, the warrior God, the conqueror of demons. His sign is Kukkuta (the fighting cock). His brother is more celebrated, known under the twofold name of Ganesha and Ganpati. He is the God of wisdom, and as such is depicted with the head of an elephant. His wisdom is seen in two directions:—

1. He controls the power of darkness solely through his marvellous skill and diplomacy, by using a sort of blackmail (paid through the priests) to keep the hosts of evil spirits from doing harm to his worshippers, for the simple Hindu thinks that bribery has influence with the unseen powers, as they know it has with all people around them.

2. Ganesha is also the patron of learning. Hence his image is generally seen in native schools. Scholars pray to him to aid them in their studies. Among orthodox Hindus no letter is begun without first offering a prayer to him. Moreover, many Hindu

books are inscribed to him, and begin with the formula "Sri Ganesaya Namah." This is done in order to invoke the God to counteract the malignity of demons who may wish to do harm to the author's work, or hinder its success or usefulness.

His annual feast is called Ganesh Chaturthi. Among the poor Ryots two attendants upon the divine Siva are in much favour, called Khetrapal and Bhairon. These are bribed (through the priests) to put in a good word with the Divine Siva on behalf of the worshippers, so as to have their fields protected against evil spirits. Their idea seems to be that these daily attendants have a certain influence with Siva, and they are therefore bribed in order to say a good word in favour of the humble peasants to whom the worship of Siva or his sons is too expensive.

We may sum up by giving the various reasons assigned for ascetic practices sacred to Siva:—

1. To keep the body in subjection.

2. To conquer evil desires.
3. To propitiate the divine powers.
4. Emancipation from Samsara (renewed births).
5. To meditate and commune with one's own soul.
6. To release one's self from the fatigue of life with its trials and sorrows.
7. Contempt of the world. An Ascetic considers the present world all wrong, too unclean to be a fit home for a holy man, therefore a place to flee from for every one who would save his soul.

In the third manifestation of Brahm we find that the destructive energy of the world, the great destroyer of all things, had been transferred to Siva's female co-worker or consort, but vilified and degraded, known under the name of the Black Mother Kali or Durga. She has the Yoni and Yantra for accepted symbols.

This idea was derived from the Tantras, and it reflects the sentiments of the most stupid and depraved classes of Non-Aryans,

such as those standing outside the sacred castes, the wild hill tribes, who are untamed to this day, and include robbers, murderers, and other desperadoes. All these worship Kali as their avowed patroness, and offer bloody sacrifices to propitiate her favour and secure her protection. She is also the patroness of smallpox, famines, and pestilence. The degradation of womanhood seems to have arisen from the low estimate of woman held by these Aborigines. They conceived her to occupy a much lower position in creation than man, as prone to evil, deceitful, spiteful, and restless. Hence they pictured Kali as a black monster of wickedness, with the spirit of a revengeful, bloodthirsty cannibal; indeed, nothing was too bad or black to ascribe to her. The great festivals held in Eastern India once a year, called Charak Pujab (which means "swinging in the air") in her honour, also called Maha Kali (*i.e.* the great destroyer of all things), is still very popular among the lower classes, and is an occasion for licentious orgies; so, too, are the Durga Pujab festivals.

The Goddess is known under two aspects:—

1. As the *white* Goddess or Gauri, presiding over Nature in all its processes of life and reproduction.

2. As the *black* Goddess or Mahadevi, presiding over Nature in its processes of destruction and death.

The city of Calcutta derives its name from this Goddess. The place was formerly called Kali-Kata, *i.e.* the place of burning human sacrifices in honour of Kali. For many centuries the worship among these people consisted in the sacrifice of human beings. Not until the British Aryans gained sufficient hold upon India was this practice prohibited, as well as the immolation of widows on the funeral pile and infanticide. Nowadays this dreadful black goddess has to be content with the sacrifice of animals, such as buffaloes and goats, but even these bloody offerings are falling into disuse, as civilisation and the terror of the law are spreading over the whole of India.

The worship of this female cult is called

Saktism, and is by no means in other respects falling into disfavour with its millions of adherents. On the contrary, the female worship has extended into even more licentious practises than ever before, whereby the cult has reached as low a depth of corruption as is found anywhere outside Hinduism.

Besides Kali, Durga, or Mata, there are also found other classes of feminine deities, who are worshipped chiefly by the women of India, such as Matris or divine mothers, Yogins or Goddesses endowed with powers of magic, and Mahavidyas endowed with divine knowledge of coming events.

While formerly the adherents of the respective sects of Hari and Har were bitterly opposed to each other, nowadays with the advent of milder manners and a more tolerant faith, the two sects as a rule live amicably side by side. Indeed attempts have been made to reconcile them by pointing out that the way of "devotion" (Vishni) and the way of "work" (Siva) are united in the way of "knowledge" (Brahm), so that, after all, there is a funda-

mental unity in the trinity. As an illustration they point out that the Trimurti, *i.e.* the three-fold image, has three heads carved out of one stone; hence in this is seen the symbol of divine Unity in Trinity. The Hindus recognise Vishni especially in the noble heroes who have arisen from time to time in India, and of whom they are proud. Hence the warrior caste (Kshatriya) belong mostly to the worshippers of Vaishnavism.

The wife of Brahm is called Saraswati, and is looked upon as the Goddess of learning.

We have now considered the three outstanding religious sects in modern Hinduism. They are, however, subdivided into many smaller sects, and the caste system helps to multiply them. There are three other classes of worship still regularly in use in India deserving attention.

We have already referred to them in other places, so it will suffice if I now merely summarise them.

1. Worship of spirits of the beneficent type, such as Avatars, Gods incarnate upon earth,

Heroes, Saints, and especially their own Ancestors, along with all tutelary deities, who protect people from evil influences and misfortune.

2. Worship of spirits of the malevolent type, who wish to injure or destroy people. Hence the almost universal worship of Ganesa, the Lord of the Demon hosts.

3. Worship of spirits inhabiting Nature, upon whom they may depend for prosperity and blessings, such as spirits inhabiting animals, insects, fishes, trees, plants, stones, the air, the sun, moon and stars, also rivers, pools, wells, utensils, &c.

It is thus that the religious spirit permeates society in India through all strata to an extent hardly met elsewhere in the world, whether among civilised or uncivilised races. How the thick veils of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice may be gradually and gently removed from the minds of these conservative kinsmen of ours, is a delicate and difficult problem. In a future volume I shall try to give you my ideas of the most likely steps

required to be taken, which may open the way for the advent of a Monotheistic Religion of Beauty to be engrafted upon modern Hinduism in the centuries yet to come.

Sin

THERE can be no sin where is yet no conscience or knowledge of a moral sanction. Man having evolved from a lower form, his mental and moral faculties, his conscience, his sense of perfection, his capacity for religion and communion with God, have all been acquired by slow degrees and by natural processes. By a gradual process of growth man's soul in its evolution has attained to higher ethical and spiritual conceptions and realisations. This process is still going on and will continue in ages yet to come.

The conception of sin, therefore, begins at the point where moral sentiments emerge. Men came to perceive that there exists a moral order in the world, and that when their actions are at variance with their order, they commit sin. Sin is therefore a violation of

the rule of right. It is an injury against the true interests of society, against our higher self whose interests are identical with those of society, and against the God who is immanent in us and in the world. It is by the perception of a standard of excellence transcending our actual attainments that we become conscious of sin. God has attached penalties on earth to every transgression of His wise laws, for there is a close and necessary connection between sin and suffering, not in a vindictive spirit, but as a warning, so that the soul may take alarm and avoid it as the plague. Where sin has been committed the punishment becomes a divine means of winning the erring soul back to God, for it learns to hate and forsake sin. In this way it is seen that punishment bears an aspect of divine love.

And the soul realises that the world is governed not by a revengeful or a fiendish spirit who courts us to our destruction, but by a living, loving, personal God, who wishes every soul to be as free and happy, as beautiful and glorious as Himself. This end, however,

can only be attained by walking in the paths of peace, truth, love, and righteousness, or, in other words, by obeying the perfect laws of the spiritual world upon which God in His wisdom has founded existence. As a soul advances in the perfect life, it is forced by actual experience to approve of these laws, and admire them as being manifestly the only ones which a Divine Being of perfect wisdom, perfect love, and perfect justice could have devised for the progress, happiness, and glory of all.

We see, therefore, that sin is discord, whereas the true life for humanity is the life of perfect harmony with God and our fellow-men in mutual love and true fellowship.

Upon the lower platform of humanity we find the animal nature still predominating with brutish instincts of callous indifference to others' welfare or sufferings, if so be that Self is thereby the gainer. In proportion, however, as our social and religious nature develops, as the sense of brotherhood gains

the mastery, as God's claim upon us is recognised, so is any wrong done to others felt to be sin, for which we are responsible not only to the one injured, but also to God, who, as the divine lawgiver, will have both the power and the will to vindicate His own laws by punishing those who disobey them.

Now, as long as God was conceived as a stern judge or despotic ruler, and our relation towards Him as that of rebels or criminals who would be brought before His judgment-seat to be sentenced to our respective eternal punishments for the wilful defiance of His will, so long was the idea of heavenly mediators, intercessors, or reconcilers found necessary for the rescue of sinners from their impending doom. Such an idea naturally took root and grew luxuriantly in religious systems even to our own days, chiefly because all these conceptions contained some grains of truth.

If, however, instead of looking upon God as an implacable, revengeful, and despotic ruler, we look upon Him in His true nature as

love's perfect ideal and expression, every one of His matchless perfections harmonised and utilised by love and for love, then the true relationship between man and his Maker takes quite another and a more glorious aspect, for now a truer perspective comes into view.

The theory of Evolution also comes to our help, for it is seen that humanity is being evolved, and that there is still a struggle going on between the lower and the higher nature in every soul.

In the former it is excessive self-love or selfishness, the sole aim of which is to please and gratify the cravings of "self," even at the expense of others, and without any reference to God's will or pleasure. In the latter it is the conquest of divine love in the soul which henceforth regulates and guides it so as to live to the well pleasing of God in all things, with brotherly love and kindly sympathy towards others, because they are a part of ourselves as we are all part of God.

Now in this scheme of evolution, based upon love and the manifestation of God's exceeding

love towards us, how must we look upon sin? Well, we saw already that every transgression whether of physical or moral laws brings its appropriate punishment in this world, either direct or indirect, and that evil bears the seeds of its own destruction. There is this great difference, however, between the old and the new theory, that in the latter, God in His love is seen never to punish in vengeance or in wrath, but only out of love to correct, improve, and to save. Until this is understood the world will continue to think hard thoughts of God, to feel depressed and crushed by pain, sin, and death, and look upon these as inscrutable mysteries. When humanity, however, is more fully evolved, there will be not only a truer knowledge of the divine and human relationship to justify God's dealings with us and ours, and captivate our love and admiration of Him, but there will also of necessity emerge a willing and constant obedience to the physical, mental, and moral laws which are perceived to have been enacted for the soul's highest happiness by a God of infinite

love and wisdom. In proportion as the God-consciousness or communion with the Highest is gaining ground, to that extent any deviation from the right path is felt acutely as a breach in the loving relation and communion between God and the soul. In many of the Hebrew psalms this sentiment is found beautifully expressed in the soul's sorrow and shame at having grieved God's loving heart; hence contrition, repentance, and resolves for a better life in future. Therefore, if the desires of the self-centred soul lead astray, because these result in violations of the divine law of love, the desires of the God-centred soul are those which lead on the right path, because these result in the complete victory of divine love in the hearts of men.

In this way the great moral problem is solved how to purge human nature of egoism, and win and woo the soul as an immortal being with free will, so that it may qualify itself for the life which is not grounded upon self-interest, self-indulgence, self-aggrandisement, or self-glory, but upon willing sacrifices for

the benefit of others, upon an altruism which leads to holier, loftier, and higher ideals of brotherhood. 'These ideals lead finally to the love of God, with a cheerful obedience to His wise and beneficent laws upon which are founded the soul's true welfare and happiness.

Sin in its relation to others is to many the darkest enigma of all. Here, again, we come upon the Karma doctrine and see its wrong assumptions, for the cardinal point of it is that every man must bear his own burden. As a man sows, so must he reap. In other words, it declares that man is his own destroyer or his own deliverer. This is, however, only partly true, and altogether wrong in the dogmatic way assumed by its adherents. The right point of view is to recognise that our life is not a solitary one in the world, but that besides the personal, it is also bound up with the family, the social, the ancestral, the racial, and, we may add, with the divine life. Hence hourly and daily we are influenced by others as we in return influence them.

It is true that we start life as separate in-

dividuals, and we believe that we shall so continue throughout all eternity, but otherwise we inherit from our parents and ancestors all the habits and characteristics of good and evil which are classed nowadays under the word "heredity," hence we often reap what we have not personally sown, whether of good or evil.

We may, therefore, sum up by saying that our characters and the works of Karma which flow therefrom are practically a co-operative result. This view has the advantage of removing Karma from an entirely egoistical to an altruistic life, for we hardly ever suffer alone or rejoice alone. As members of society our best ideals become social products, seen in a life of love and service for humanity. From being self-centred we come to realise that in a larger and truer sense we are part and parcel of humanity, in whose life we have an intimate share, whether in its weal or its woe, for we frequently suffer or benefit individually just because we are social and bound up together.

We further realise, and the thought should fill us with pride and pleasure, that we may

also be co-workers and co-sharers with the Almighty in everything upon earth noble, elevating, beneficent, and beautiful. Thus humanity will come to realise that it is part of an infinite, ever advancing life, which leads it towards the fullest realisation of its beinghood with all the glories this involves.

Before going further let me try to justify God's dealings with men by having allowed evil to enter into the world. Evil in the world is of two kinds, physical and moral. In a life of schooling or training we cannot conceive of the gradual perfection of character of humanity without such a world of conflicts, sufferings, and trials as actually exists. If hardships, difficulties, or disappointments were taken out of the world, there could be no means of bringing out the human virtues, which are so much admired, such as fortitude, patience, courage to fight and overcome temptations, nobility of soul, self-sacrifice for the good of others, self-control, a widening and deepening of our sympathies with others, a beautiful submission and an unfaltering trust in God. Thus all trials

may be looked upon as means to an end, the development of all that is highest and noblest within us.

The human soul must undergo a process of discipline to fit it for a higher existence, hence pain is meant to be the crucible in which life is refined. Life, with its trials and temptations, becomes the factory of character. Every temptation resisted, every evil habit conquered, is a step further forward towards the spiritual perfection for which we were destined. We are to become the instruments of Divine Love, the bright expression of the ideal brotherhood and universal goodwill towards all men.

Moral evil we see, therefore, is a necessary part of the divine plan to bring all men to love goodness and pursue it for its own sake.

Again, moral evil is the inevitable result of a period of growth and transition, and in history we see exemplified on a larger scale the misuse of liberty. Man only learns to use his liberty aright by the preliminary process of making mistakes, hence the moral world is not yet in any sense a final result.

The whole race rises by slow and painful steps toward perfection. For every soul, therefore, there is a series of stages to be passed through before ripeness or maturity can be reached. In other words, love must be cultivated and grow in the soul until it longs for no greater joy than the joy of loving God and man. Owing to God's love to us He will not lose us. He will finish our education, here or hereafter, when we shall come to realise that goodness and happiness are inseparably linked together. In love alone there is perfect freedom. True love is the supreme pleasure of giving itself up to make another being happy. Herein we have an image of God's infinite and inexhaustible love towards us. This is the highest and noblest conception of God. This may well call forth our joyful love and adoration of Him for ever.

These considerations lead us to the subject of *Forgiveness of Sins*.—Now, as we saw among the Buddhists, there is no room for the forgiveness of sin, because every sin has to be atoned for, there being no exception. Karma works

out its own salvation. The debt must be paid to the last farthing and by the sinner himself, either here or hereafter. This theory is, however, defective, for it overlooks the fact that atonement for the sin of an individual is very often brought about by sacrifices or intercessions made by others on his behalf. In this way we see that the innocent suffers and saves the actual culprit from the consequences of his evil doings, so far as this is possible. Indeed, souls are always mediating between other souls. This spiritual principle runs through all human life, making vicarious sacrifice a living fact and proving beyond a doubt the solidarity of humanity. Herein is the conception of the Karma theory found defective. ✂

Among the strict Vedanta philosophers, by whom Brahm is looked upon as all in all, it is held that there can in reality be no separate will to oppose the divine will, and, therefore, that no sin can be committed in the modern acceptance of the word. It is simply "Avidya," *i.e.* ignorance arising from an intellectual shortcoming that causes men to suffer, and no ethical

value is attached thereto so as to induce contrition for sins.

Forgiveness of sins to the majority of Hindus means the remission of punishment, or the evasion of the penalties which it was thought had been decreed by the gods. In this way the relation between the worshippers and their deities was put on a commercial basis, as if there existed a species of contract—on the one side so much worship, so many sacrifices or gifts, to be followed by a return from the deities in the shape of sins forgiven or of material blessings bestowed. This led naturally, as we saw in our studies, to a most exacting ceremonial; hence it was believed that any mistakes or omission in the religious service might nullify the whole ritual. Therefore, breaches of ceremonials came to be thought more dangerous than evil acts, and the result was of course disastrous to morality and true religion.

Forgiveness of sins in another and very popular aspect meant that punishments of sins had not only to be endured in this life,

but that by Heaven's decrees they continued throughout eternity and in a much more dreadful and revolting manner by everlasting torments. Yet here again the remission of sins was invented in order to save the sinner from his imaginary awful doom. Thus, there were salvations by atonements, by propitiations, by priestly sacraments, by confessions, by absolutions, by masses, by divine saviours sent down from heaven to appease God's wrath and fury, and so on. This view of substitution, however, is also seen now to be erroneous, and is gradually losing its ancient hold upon intelligent men.

Lastly, forgiveness of sins in the Religion of Beauty comes with love's victory in the soul of man. It is the restoration of a broken harmony, attained by repentance, by forsaking sins and hating them. It is a moral transformation of life; it calls forth moral enthusiasm, and the aspiration for a fuller, more harmonious, and more abounding life is awakened. The soul at last falls in love with goodness and unselfishness. It desires to

follow goodness, truth, and righteousness from a deliberate choice, not from incapacity to be otherwise. The final issue will be that sin and selfishness will be eternally expunged from the hearts of men, and this done of their own free will. God will then have our heart's love as the spring of action. The soul will thereby be brought into a rightful, loving relation with God. It is abundantly proved that a religion of love always favourably affects the heart and character as nothing else can do—certainly not a religion of fear, gloom, and suspicion.

Let me repeat, the only power which can purge our hearts of the love of sin, is the love of God. Love to Him, kindled by His love to us. Of one thing any way we may be certain, which is calculated to cheer our way through this world, and also to shed a bright light on the world to come, and that is the assurance of the everlasting and triumphantly conquering love of God in the heart of every soul, by which we shall rise into oneness with that Higher Self which is life and happiness indeed, because it is eternal love. This

glorious truth transforms and transfigures our lives.

Let us turn now to the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty. This is a life as well as a creed. It is love and willing sacrifices to God, manifested practically by love and service to help and heal the wounds of poor suffering mankind. It is divine love in operation in the soul which delights to give, and especially to give its best for the enrichment and uplifting of the unworthy, a loving sacrifice for the weak and the wayward, the submerged and unfortunate classes which need help most. God's representatives upon earth don't lose heart, however, for in every soul of man, woman, and child they see promises of infinite and eternal possibilities, of spiritual expansion, restoration, and happiness. Here or hereafter every soul shall yet be in harmony with God. The world's ideal is every man for himself, but in the religion of Beauty the vicarious principle is at work; hence a new standard is unfurled, and this is "the ministry of helpfulness," because, as has been said, humanity is one

family, which it is intended should be bound by ties of love and mutual help for the common good and welfare.

God, being love, has therefore called us all into being, that we may glorify Him, showing our thankfulness and love to Him by loving, serving, and helping one another, believing that all evil, all that is below us, is subordinated to ultimate good, and that in the salvation of character and in love to the Highest is the regeneration of society and the introduction of ultimate civilisation.

We further believe that it is a glorious work to assist in the divine education and restoration of man, seeing that humanity has a great destiny before it, so that even the most unpromising specimens are worth helping in the way of developing their better selves, although now perhaps buried amid the ruins of their lower nature. We should remember the infinite worth of every soul, and that the meanest is but the highest in the germ.

As society comes better to represent man's higher nature, it also, in its corporate capacity,

will take in hand the task of reforming the sunken masses, by uplifting and purifying the life and institutions of the people, by the upbringing and protecting of poor or neglected children, providing better houses, fighting drunkenness and other vices, improving education, and elevating the ideals of the citizens; for the ideal life is the life which is lived for the whole. In short, we should endeavour to ameliorate the condition of human existence in general all over the world, making it difficult to do ill, and easy to do well. Only the attractions of divine love can fully accomplish the salvation to be effected in every case, only partially here, in fullness hereafter. As we have shown, the fundamental characteristic of social progress is the continuous weakening of selfishness and the continuous strengthening of sympathy with those who really need it, a gradual supplanting of egoism by altruism. The progress of rescuing human souls on the way to ruin will therefore necessarily be a slow one, because growth is the gradual development of latent powers. Hence time must be

allowed for the uprising and unfolding of the divine life within the soul. In this life even the best of men are more or less out of harmony with their higher nature. There is ever a conflict going on, a war against the animal or lower nature which still clings to the soul. Humanity in its spiritual aspect is not completed, in fact is only yet in the making. This life is only a prelude to the complete victory we shall gain in the coming ages in our progress Godwards. Indeed, to reach the limit of the soul's full capacity will be the occupation of eternity. To travel on the way towards the ever-deepening life of our soul's perfection, let us remember:—

Firstly, we must realise our oneness with God in His beautiful character, aims, and purposes, and have the desire to do something to realise that oneness by deeds of love to others. His deep interest in us and our trust in His almighty power will work on our behalf and in us, so that we shall acquire a transcendent moral beauty and spiritual excellence, an image of His own, for in this only

lies the soul's perfect satisfaction and happiness. In love and admiration of God the whole heart must be given to Him, the whole life devoted to Him, all our powers consecrated to Him. Thus true religion will be proved the source of joy and happiness, and the triumph of the spirit of brotherhood will follow.

Secondly, to an awakened soul sin must be felt to be the worst of all evils both for ourselves and for those we love; for sin, apart from all other dire consequences to ourselves and others, brings about the degradation of man's higher nature. Whether the sin is found out or not it always debases the character, which in itself is a great calamity, seeing that the development and exaltation of character and the evolution of moral qualities are the chief reasons of man's life upon earth as a preparation for the life eternal. It is thus seen that we are destined to rise to the love life for others, and are being trained for it here, in which love life God Himself is living, for He is love itself in all its purity, beauty, and perfection.

Thirdly, we must realise that on entering this life many a soul is burdened by heredity with a large share of brutish instincts, animal passions, predisposition to evil and selfishness, while through this life the soul is surrounded and influenced by the most unfavourable and degrading environments. Can we wonder, therefore, if moral wrecks abound in the world? Such a soul is an unpromising character to develop into a saint, and many think it is impossible to succeed in a short earth life, even in the dimmest outlines. Yet God knows best how to effect this wonderful transformation, for in His providence He has many sharp cutting instruments and rough files for the polishing of the hardest diamonds, as He has the healing medicine for the broken hearts. The latter He generally administers through those on earth who reflect his pitying, compassionate nature. It is here that vicarious sacrifice comes in to bless and uplift humanity. This principle is both beautiful and true. It has always been in operation, since motherhood first sacrificed itself for the sake of its

offspring, which means from the beginning of time, its spring and source being in God Himself. Therefore, even although all may seem lost in dealing with depraved characters, yet there may be hope for their restoration even in this life, as there assuredly will be in the life to come, where all that is evil in them will be eliminated in God's own way, and all that is good and true in them will be developed and perfected. We all leave this world imperfect in our characters. It is only a question of degree. We ought, therefore, to be humble and charitable in our judgment of others, trusting in the compassionate and all-merciful God; seeing that He "knowing all, forgiveth all," yea even more: He "sanctifieth" all, so that He may "glorify" all.

Fourthly, we may be assured that the divine life in eternity which awaits us will be one mainly of service. Where love is in operation, such a life becomes one of delight. We are here as apprentices to learn the art of service, to become distributors of God's bounties to others, after having been ourselves

receivers of His manifold mercies. Our chief aim should therefore be to make the world better, holier, and happier, for we are not separate units who can be considered apart from each other. Humanity as a whole stands in need of being lifted from its lower self to a higher platform, and this the Religion of Beauty is trying to effect, along with all other faiths like-minded.

After all it is only when the souls of those lost to goodness come to realise that God is Infinite Love, and in spite of everything is still loving and pitying them, and that He is willing to blot out the past if they return to a new and higher life in which God can begin to realise Himself in their souls, then only is there a possibility of their hearts being touched and stirred with self-reproach and remorse, and the longing for a better life. The mistrust, the hard thoughts of God will disappear when God is seen in His captivating beauty with a heart of boundless love towards them, a disinterested, pitying, helpful, forgiving, and restoring love.

And they will come to believe all this and thankfully rest their souls upon it, not because they have read about it or heard sermons about it, but because those who love God, and who try to represent Him in some faint measure upon earth, become as it were God's almoners, saviours, beneficent providences, and winning examples, bringing sunshine into the lives of others. These show towards the unfortunate, the fallen, the lost exactly the same beautiful, attractive, and helpful spirit in which God Himself is represented. They see these heavenly and beautiful graces in earthly forms among common men and women, and it helps them in believing and realising God's exceeding love and pity. In this revelation of God's loving purposes to them their hearts are drawn to trust God and to live for Him. Therefore, under the transforming power of this new affection the restored ones gradually fall in love with truth and goodness, and begin to delight in God's ways of peace and well-doing. They see the wisdom in not seeking to gratify their unhallowed

desires, but rather in doing their best to stamp them out by keeping their minds well employed in useful work. As God's spirit begins to fill their souls they become lovable personalities, radiating a sunny, cheerful, and helpful disposition to others, enthusiastic for righteousness, with nobility of aim and godliness of life. They are now trying to make the world richer and happier by being in it, a blessing and an inspiration to all around them. Thus step by step they begin to climb the high road of love's dedication to the glorious destination of inconceivable perfection and happiness, which shall be theirs just in proportion as the soul grows more and more in the likeness of God's sublime, beautiful, and self-sacrificing character.

In conclusion, human life upon earth is only intelligible as being the avenue and vestibule to another life, where we shall attain fulfilment of the great purpose of God, summed up in the perfection of our moral and spiritual beinghood, with all the ineffable joys and delights of which our nature is capable.

Death and Immortality

MODERN evolution, by its investigations, has cleared up numerous misconceptions held by the ancients and still prevalent in many quarters. Among these beliefs the one bearing upon death has been profoundly modified. In ancient times the body was looked upon as a prison to the soul, and the earth a larger prison to the body. Where a religion of fear was dominated with unworthy ideas of God, there terrors were associated with death, and gloomy were the conceptions about it. Humanity was appalled by the prospects of having to face eternal condemnation, an awful judgment with decrees to hold good for eternity. Thus life became a cursed existence, and God a hateful, implacable enemy, and a stern executor of eternal ruin.

Only a sacred priesthood with its philo-

sophy of salvation from sin and its imagined frightful consequences stood between them and eternal destruction. Untold millions have been made miserable throughout their lives, and especially at the approach of death, by these imaginary fears and wrong conceptions of God. Happily humanity has now entered upon better times when truer conceptions have been formed to honour God the Beautiful. In consequence a truer and brighter faith has been founded upon it.

Thus evolution has taught humanity to believe in a better and higher perfection for which it is destined not only in a future state after death, but already now in this earthly life. We ought, therefore, to work impelled by the constructive and dynamic force of love, to make life brighter, healthier, happier, and more beautiful to ourselves and all around us. As members one of another the aim will be to infuse the spirit of justice and love, to attach more importance to moral character and spiritual excellencies than to material wealth. It will mean an aristocracy of worth

in the best sense. The conviction of the triumph of truth and justice will give strength in temptation, hope in affliction, confidence in tribulation.

It becomes clear that, instead of this world being a prison for our bodies and our bodies the prison of the soul, the very opposite is the case. It is seen how much admiration is due to God both for creating the world and the body of man. These are now discovered to be both creations of marvellous beauty in their design, uses, and execution, and inexpressibly sublime in their harmonies.

Another wonderful truth is emphasised now, which throws a new complexion both on life and death, and this is the essential relation of the human spirit to the Infinite. From this point of view the prospects of humanity are illimitably grand and uplifting.

Still another truth grows out of this. We begin to realise God's unutterable love towards humanity, and that we are destined to enjoy a blessed communion with God which transcends all conceptions. With such delightful

and cheering prospects of a life in loving relationship to the source of our being, our earthly existence assumes a different aspect. Life is not only seen to be based on a moral foundation, thus guaranteeing that a higher good will eventually evolve out of the present lower good, but it is also seen to be founded essentially upon joy and beauty, showing that God wishes us already in this life to be happy, and to cultivate a joyful and cheerful disposition to meet life's struggles, not as slaves with curses on our lips, but as devoted lovers, whose joy is to live for the pleasure of the betrothed, and for developing every grace of spiritual beauty in which the beloved delights.

It is now also recognised that this world is the soul's nursery, a training place for humanity, the first school in which is learnt the ABC of the laws of perfection, soul culture, soul nobility, and soul happiness. Naturally many a slip is made, many a fall sustained, and where the soul's education has been neglected, poor, stunted, pitiful specimens are produced to the hurt and disgrace of the

rest of humanity, hindering the upward march. Society depends upon each one, although it may not realise or recognise that we are all members of one living organism, sharing in one common life. Being really one, we complete ourselves in each other. Therefore, although the wrecks of humanity may have made a false start in this first school of probation, perhaps not so much from their own fault as from the criminal neglect of others, the end is not yet. They, too, will have their chances of developing all that is best in them, and of starting on the road to perfection in another existence, for sympathy, love, pity, and help will not always be denied them. Perhaps our work in the next stage will be to reclaim and restore those whom we neglected in this life, so that humanity in each of its members, even in the most insignificant and unpromising, may in due time attain to the stature of glorified, completed humanity, an immortal beauty permeating each and all, and this before still higher stages of existence are entered upon by humanity as a whole.

Now, lastly, let us consider the question of death to which our various reflections have led us. We are born to die. It is as natural to die as it is to be born. Death is not the penalty of sin as formerly erroneously believed. These considerations deprive death of its sting. Formerly death was looked upon as the jailer who dragged unwilling souls to the judgment-seat, where they were claimed by demons as their rightful due to suffer an eternity of unspeakable woe, having died unforgiven.

Death is now seen as the ministering angel of mercy who gently guides the soul from the world's dim twilight to an endless day of joy, where hearts glow with the sacred fire of aspiration for the full attainment of the purity, truth, love, joy, and beauty which are stretching before them. With these are God's smiles of encouragement for each and all to run with zeal and delight the race for perfection, the first steps of which they made or should have made here. These beautiful graces are the children of the immortal life; they can never die.

This idea is further confirmed when we

consider that at death we leave the world in various stages of development. There is so much in each of us that is not developed at all, seeds of rare excellency lying dormant in the soul, there being nothing in earth's chilling environment which could develop them in this life. But by-and-by under a brighter sky and more genial environment marvellous forms may spring up from the neglected soil, miracles of growth, transformations of surpassing beauty. Therefore no one must despise an immortal soul while on earth, for although frail may be its mortal vesture, and low may be its accomplishments or occupation in this life, yet it bears the seal of immortality. Soul growth, soul culture, and active love are the grand ends of life, and therefore God raises us towards ever expanding capacities of mind and heart when removing us from this school of training to other and higher ones as we are capable and fit for them. What should we long for more than to depart in God's own time to be with Him, leaving behind us the storms, stress, and strife of life with the im-

perfections which cling to us during our stay here. We ought to bless God for sending death to draw the veil and reveal to our longing souls the glories of a new emancipation with vistas of endless perfection.

There being no barriers between God and the soul, what a superlatively grand and consoling idea is that of death, conceived as a birth into a more glorious existence. It opens a vista of endless life and everlasting delights.

This well-grounded hope yields to us the richest and sweetest of all consolations. It is precious, stimulating, and ennobling to human hearts with their infinite yearnings for perfection and happiness, with their love of life, with their passionate desires for a happy reunion with responsive hearts; with their longings for a fuller revelation of God in all His wondrous beauty.

This hope exalts men's lives and purifies men's hearts. In this gladsome aspect death is seen to give a fresh start to the soul and new opportunities of retrieving the failures and shortcomings of the past.

Here little progress can be made by any of us. In eternity our bright home will be the full attainment.

We leave, therefore, this world to go on advancing from our present stage of discipline to others higher still, where there will be nobler growth resulting in greater beauty of soul, with higher services, fuller joys, a richer and more glorified life. As has been said :

“What has not been learned here must be learned there, what was undone here must be done in the world to come. It needs another sun and another existence to bring our undeveloped or misdirected faculties to the fruition of perfection.”

Death comes equally to us all, and makes all equal when it does come, but although all living things succumb to death's assaults, life in a higher sense is conqueror over death. Life is calm at death's approach, for although it makes a grave of man's lower nature, God makes this grave to serve as the cradle of man's higher immortal life. Thus life becomes the conqueror by death. The

vanquished is in the highest aspect the victor.

Let me add this. The belief in a blessed immortality is of great practical value to us as a hope, an encouragement, and a reward. This belief lightens many of the sore trials and sufferings of this life. It gives us a stronger hold upon the deeper unseen realities of existence whereby earthly things are seen in their true perspective as of comparative little significance.

By this faith also there comes a lofty purpose worth living for, a glorious end worth striving for. It is an impulse to human progress, a spur to loving actions, a strong ever present consolation, a living hope when death approaches that God will make the future life to us an infinite blessing.

To love for ever is to live for ever, for by loving we live in harmony with the divine and eternal constitution of things.

Again, with God, conceived as infinite, unchanging, benevolent love, there comes an absolute confidence in His motives,

His methods, and His loving purposes towards us.

Such a perfect trust in God naturally brings with it a hopeful spirit, tranquillity of mind, rest, peace, and joy in the soul. It leads furthermore to a constant growth in all the noble qualities of soul, to a beauty and a graciousness of life which reflects, in however imperfect a way, God's own beautiful, attractive and bliss-giving character, by which He desires to make us radiantly happy and perfect as He is Himself.

Before leaving this subject, you desire to have my views of the soul's future existence, and how death will affect it.

Well, the Mahomedan's conception of a sensuous paradise and those of other ancient nations who imagined a coming judgment-day which would determine the soul's final destiny, these and similar views, I believe, are destined to be supplanted by the modern conception based upon evolution, which is a safer and more reliable guide, yielding a more satisfying and

truer explanation than the theories inherited from primitive times.

From what we see around us in this world, where amidst what is fleeting, the permanent remains, there is nothing to indicate that the death of a human being will be the end of the soul, because the transient medium of its communications with the outer world is dissolved by the dissolution of the body. All our experiences of the continuity of soul-life around us forbid such a supposition.

We must realise that the soul-life is like an unbroken journey, inasmuch as we commence each stage just where we left off the previous one, through the whole gamut from childhood to old age.

If this is true of our earthly existence, everything indicates that by parity of reason the future life will grow out of the present as the latter has grown out of that which preceded it.

We saw the Gita pointed out in a striking way that at death we put off our bodies as worn-out garments in order to be clothed upon it other forms for the life eternal.

This suggests, with the clue which evolution gives, that our next incarnation will arise out of the present soul-life, only preserving all that is really of infinite worth, say the gold separated from the dross. In other words, only the soul's high principles and gracious dispositions will survive, with love to God, the fruit of which is seen in noble thoughts and loving deeds, crystallised during a lifetime into a beautiful Godlike character.

Evolution leads, therefore, to the conclusion that in the next existence the transfigured life has been evolved from that part of the soul-life upon earth, which was of immortal value and which therefore only constituted its higher self. Incarnated in subtler and nobler forms, it starts upon a progressive existence which ever stretches before the aspiring soul.

If this is so, then all that was degrading, sordid, selfish, and evil, and which had chained the soul down to lower levels, will perish with the body, because all these imperfections, which are earthly and temporal, carry within them their own dissolution, being unfitted

for the larger and nobler life beyond the grave.

In eternity the realm of true values of infinite worth, only as it were the coins of pure gold bearing the King's own superscription will be received. The deserts of an unrighteous life seem often to pass unpunished while on earth, yet it is only apparently so, for, sooner or later, the punishment comes either directly or indirectly, and in any case every sin always retards or checks the soul's growth heavenward and debases the character, which is one of the greatest calamities for an immortal soul. Moreover, often, oh so often, the consequences of a man's sins are felt most by innocent ones, even perhaps a man's own dearest kith and kin, as well as by society at large. This arises from the law of Karma in its social aspect. One would think that even in eternity the awakened conscience would have no rest until due reparation was made, if still possible, even though forgiveness from the sufferers had been freely obtained.

Seeing that even those who are the greatest

disgrace to society, yea, those classed among the worst characters and hardened criminals have yet, in virtue of belonging to humanity, some redeeming features of character, or at least longings for a better life, the inarticulate voice of the higher self. Therefore evolution supports the theory that every soul, however low may be its degree of perfection, will yet attain a loftier existence, as its inalienable birthright, reserved for it by the exceeding love of God, to be realised along the pathway of infinite progress.

The different fates which await each of us in eternity must be determined as the necessary result of the present life's actions. Hence it follows that souls will enter eternity in different stages of preparation and development, some as it were babes in spiritual growth, possessing only a few treasures of immortal worth, a few lovable graces and gifts, as their souls' equipment, the rest being only as yet in embryo. Others leave the world rich in heavenly treasures and qualified by their earthly consecration and labours of love to enter upon loftier duties

involving higher advancements, honours, and bliss.

We know that at death the soul loses not only its earthly form, but also earthly honours, fame, and wealth, with its dear relatives and friends, all of which the soul prized so much. This is sad, but there is another and a more pleasing aspect of death, for, thanks to God, the soul loses also at the same time the infirmities of the flesh and spirit, both acting and reacting upon each other. Against the latter our better nature had often struggled in vain and sighed for deliverance. Irritable tempers, easily provoked passions, self-indulgence, uncharitableness, haughtiness, and selfishness—all of these irritated and often injured others, and hindered the soul's greater efficiency, usefulness, and development in spiritual worth and beauty. By death the release has at last come, and the gain to the soul is inconceivably greater than the loss, for the immortal spirit is free of all earthly dross. Everything apparently lost upon earth of true value will be found again, a thousand times more attractive

and lovable, and above all there will be a happy reunion of sundered hearts with everlasting rejoicing. The transfigured soul will then be seen in its engaging beauty, each according to its development, some as stars of first magnitude, others only in the early stages of their coming glory, yet each one, whether on the higher or the lower rung of the celestial ladder of perfection, will have surety of still higher progress in the heavenward evolutionary process, being aided by willing and loving souls of greater advancement.

From this point of view is seen the vital importance of attending strenuously to the soul's culture in this life with all that it involves, not, however, by retiring from the world and living a life of calm contemplation or self-introspection, but by being ready and willing to undergo sacrifices and sufferings on behalf of others, and by actively engaging in life's battles against all the ills and evils which confront humanity, so that we may leave the world a little happier and better by having been in it.

In this way, by the gradual advent of the Kingdom of love upon the earth, every soul will come to have a better chance of growing, with fewer hindrances, towards a greater likeness to God's attractive, lovable, and perfect character, in which consists man's highest honour and glory.

Owing to its great importance, let me repeat that, seeing so very much depends upon the cultivation of the soul-life and the development of the immortal graces which determine the stage upon which we shall start the life eternal, let us try to remove the disabilities and unfavourable environments which tend to fetter or hinder in this life the souls of so many human beings in their upward progress towards a higher life.

In regard to the soul's ultimate perfection there will no doubt be manifold degrees of graces and glories, which each soul will have to acquire in order to grow more and more in the divine likeness.

To this end, so that all may ultimately reach the goal of the soul's fullest develop-

ment, we must remember that there is at work in the Cosmos not only the law of continuity, but also the law of ministration and service to others, and, above all, there is the law of love, which has its source in the infinite, unchanging, compassionate, and all-conquering love of God.

Thus God is educating us in time as well as in eternity, expanding our minds, enlarging the boundary of our thoughts, so that our comprehension may be clearer, our spiritual vision keener, our sympathies deeper, and our whole life grow into the likeness of His own.

In this way we come to reflect the life of God in the purity of our thoughts and motives, in the righteousness and beauty of our actions, and in the tenderness of our deepest affections.

In this glorious conception of eternity and the soul's future it is seen that the race for perfection will never cease, and the joy of each soul will ever be on the increase, for evolution is the gospel of infinite progress. It holds before us a future of happiness and

glory so vast that our present consciousness is unable to grasp it. In this lies its infinite value and preciousness to humanity. It throws a cheering light upon death and the soul's eternal destiny, with the happiness, glory, and perfection of beinghood which will be its divine dower and generous reward.

SUMMARY

In summing up the subject of the soul's immortality, we postulated in the first place that the soul is destined for "perfection," and surely a higher and loftier end than this we cannot conceive.

The soul's gradual advance on the road to perfection being based on God's own glorious perfections, is therefore illimitable. It leads from one degree of glory to another still more sublime, beyond all earthly comprehension.

Furthermore, on the basis of evolution, we conclude that the soul's next incarnation will be regulated by the doings of the present

life, but this does not mean, as is generally believed, that we carry with us both our good and our evil deeds, and that, according as each predominate, so will our fate be either in heaven or in hell. From this conception arose the dreary dogma of transmigration of souls, and other even more gruesome and revolting doctrines.

With evolution as our guide, the truth seems rather that the soul takes with it, as its inalienable possession acquired during its lifetime on earth, only that which is of sterling, imperishable value, the true, the good, the beautiful, all that is lovable, elevating and Godlike. With these treasures of spiritual grace, whether small or great, the soul starts its new life of progress to acquire still further treasures in its transfigured incarnation to the glory and honour and well-pleasing of God, who in this way comes gradually to realise Himself more and more in every pilgrim soul.

I think that the Apostle Paul has put the conception of evolution in this connection

very strikingly in his well-known illustration, where he shows among other things that only that part of the soul's earthly acquirements, which is precious and incorruptible, will, after death, remain with it for ever, the rest, the wood, hay, and stubble, or whatever was only of a temporary nature, imperfect or evil, will be burnt up and disappear for evermore.

Therefore, instead of believing in a hell with its devouring flames, evolution steps in with its truer message, proclaiming glad tidings for humanity, prophesying the soul's endless progress and happiness with a sure hope for every soul how low soever it may have sunk on this side of the grave by its own or others faults. Human souls, then, will enter eternity in different stages of culture, gifts, development, and tendencies; each will commence the onward progress starting from the point it left off, but with more favourable environments in its ethereal form, encompassed about by loving and sympathising souls, and henceforth only under the influence of that which will draw it upwards and on-

ward, and make it fall in love with whatever is noble, true, and good.

A further lesson based upon evolution as seen at work in social life is this, that the sympathy, pity, and willing sacrifices which distinguish all noble souls on earth will be in even fuller operation in the life eternal. Hence it follows that the loving services of the highest glorified souls will ever gladly be at the disposal of those who need them most. The life eternal will therefore be in many respects as this temporary life was, namely, a life of benevolent and cheerful ministration, thus giving ample scope throughout eternity for the exercise of the beautiful graces of love, sympathy, and willing sacrifices for others.

This ministry of loving souls in the transfigured life is an uplifting thought. In every case the soul will attain in reaching the stature of a perfect character in a world of unselfishness and perfect love.

Surely such thoughts as these upon sin, death, and immortality, if incorporated in the Monotheistic Religion of Beauty, would com-

plete the superstructure, for its creed may be summed up in two short sentences:—

To love and worship God and to be loved by Him.

To love and serve our fellow men and to be loved by them.

Here, in a nutshell, lies the whole of religion and morality. In both phrases love is everything. It guides our destinies throughout, for all is only truly interpreted by love in this life and in the next. By this means there will be an ever-growing likeness to God in the beauty of His moral and spiritual character.

Therefore we must never cease to proclaim the infinite worth and divine relations of man to God, capable as the former is of entering into communion with, and participate in the holy and loving nature and purposes of God. Man may be said to be like God so far as he expresses on a finite scale God's divine attributes of justice, wisdom, and love. The more man enters into conscious union and communion with God, the more he will gradually develop that divine likeness. He will realise

that earthly life is not only a blessing of itself, but the harbinger of a still higher and more divine life. He accepts life as a gift from God thankfully, hopefully, and devoutly, because the end of it on earth will happily be the beginning of a new existence glorious beyond all human conceptions.

The end of life is in this aspect not the terminus of a journey; death is not an end in itself. It is merely, as it were, a junction where one has to change in order to start the journey to the home country, where the past will be forgotten in the joy and exaltation of an eternity of progress in the divine life of holiness, wisdom, love, and beauty, mercy and truth.

A last word about immortality. Our Norse forefathers conceived their Valhalla or Heaven as a place of festive joys, while the Hindus generally conceive heaven as a place for profound meditations and silent prayers. On the other hand medieval Christianity pictured heaven as a place for worship with singing of psalms and playing on harps.

Each of these ideas, very likely, have some aspect of truth. Thus the Aryan Vikings gave prominence to the idea of social joy as a distinct feature of heaven. The Hindus elevated the thinking faculties and private devotions as most prominent, while the early Christians emphasised the idea of social worship before the throne of God as being the outstanding feature of heaven.

We should remember, however, that the soul's essence is "activity," and that evolution shows that its perfection is based on a gradual progress. We may, therefore, imagine that the soul, as it steps out of this earth's nursery, will enter a higher training school where all the faculties of the mind, soul, and spirit will find abundant exercises to develop each to their highest perfection.

There is no necessity to think that our future life will be one of idleness, satiety, or self-indulgence; on the contrary, if the soul is made for a progress which is illimitable, it is evident that both work and special training are required. The motto of the most gifted

souls in this world has always been "Excelsior." This eager spirit for progress, for wider knowledge and perfection in every gift and grace is likely to be still in operation in eternity, and even on a much more intense scale to keep the transfigured spirit ever busy and delighted in its work.

Nor is it necessary to think that the soul will not get the benefit of its present training in practical life, in intellectual pursuits, in creations of art or works appealing more to the religious life, or which had called forth sympathy, charity, and active help towards others. Every gift or grace cultivated here will help to increase our usefulness and our happiness in the next life.

Thus in our emancipated state in eternity what splendid opportunities may there not be for the glorified spirit to continue its studies in nearly everything which interested it here and of which the first foundations were laid in this short earth life. The starry sky with its millions of shining orbs in endless degrees of development—how interesting and soul-inspir-

ing must be its further study, as the immortal spirit now makes its closer inspection, speeds on the wings of thought from one system to another, to nature's utmost bounds and comes back, the mind enriched, the spirit overwhelmed with awe and delight at all that has been revealed to it, and communicates this new knowledge to others. And what about the Artists on earth whose delight was to study colour, sound, and form in nature? What wonders of beauty, harmony, and sublimity will be revealed to their enraptured gaze, drinking in for ever with never diminishing desire the loveliness of Nature seen from more elevated, more glorious points of view, now studied with increased powers of appreciations and expressions.

And so we might refer to the Scientists, who on earth studied the wonderlands of chemistry and electricity, to the practical man of affairs, to the soul in all its relations and duties to which it had been called on earth. Everything useful learned on earth will have abundant scope for further developments by

which results the maturing of the mind and the increasing of the soul's usefulness and its bliss.

And what about the wonderful study of life in all its manifold manifestations in these vast systems which people space. Endless work before us, delightful and instructive to learn about all these wonders. Furthermore, the soul may be called upon to help and aid the progress of the principles which include all that is true, good, and beautiful in the system of things which appertain to the moral and spiritual Universe. Will there not in these distant realms, which are also reaching forth towards higher life, be room for souls who once more will be called upon to battle for right against might, good against evil, the lower to be lifted up by the higher? In short, the next existence holds out glorious prospects and possibilities for the soul's further advancement and usefulness in everything that affects its intellectual and emotional nature as well as the sense of the beautiful. The worship of God will permeate everything, for after all

it is a warm love to the Divine Being which is the mainspring of the soul's glorious life and progress in eternity.

With such cheering thoughts the soul may look forward to the life after death as full of activity, work, joy, delightful occupations, and as a blessing to all within the circle of its influence.

There will be room for all gifts and graces, and opportunities for their exercise which were often wanting on earth. There will also be room for the brave heroic spirit, for the practical active mind, as well as for the lover of all that is beautiful, tender, and elevating. Let us all, therefore, leave this world in glad hope and trust that all will be well with each and all, and that in eternity the crooked will be made straight, the bowed down will be lifted up, what is immature here will reach maturity, what is imperfect will be made perfect. There will be room and a rapturous welcome for all loved ones who enter its golden portals. We shall be satisfied when we awake with God's likeness in everything that is beautiful, for

then the soul has attained the end for which it was created by a God of bountiful love. It is one for evermore with God in love, affection, and in an eternal blissful union of souls.

THE END

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

God the Beautiful

An Artist's Creed

By E. P. B.

SECOND EDITION (translated into Japanese and German). Foolscap 8vo. 2s. 6d. *net*

SOME PRESS OPINIONS

"In this little book the author endeavours to give a sketch of the philosophy of life which sheds a light on his path through the valley of the shadow of death. . . . The writer's philosophy may be described as a kind of pantheistic idealism. He finds a manifestation of 'God the Beautiful' in Nature, in the soul of man, in all acts of human love and courage. . . . The book contains many suggestive, original, and beautiful thoughts. Future theology, he thinks, will grow out of the doctrine of the Beauty of God. The new faith will be more orthodox than the old, because it does fuller justice to the essence of the Divine

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